



## U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for your interest in becoming a citizen of the United States of America. Your decision to apply for U.S. citizenship is a very meaningful demonstration of your commitment to this country and we applaud your efforts.

The United States has a long and rich history of welcoming immigrants from all parts of the world. U.S. citizenship is the common thread that connects people from different cultures and backgrounds. For more than 200 years, the United States has remained strong because of our citizens and the common values we share. As President George W. Bush said, "America has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests and teach us what it means to be citizens. Every child must be taught these principles. Every citizen must uphold them. And every immigrant, by embracing these ideals, makes our country more, not less, American."

Enclosed is a copy of *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons*, a publication to help you study for the naturalization test and learn more about U.S. history and government. The *Quick Civics Lessons* are based on each of the sample civics questions that you should study for the naturalization test. During your naturalization interview, you will not be tested on the additional information in the short lessons. An audio CD that allows you to listen to the questions, answers, and civic lessons read aloud, is also included.

For additional study tools, or to learn more about naturalization, please visit <http://www.uscis.gov> or contact the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283. Again, thank you for your interest in U.S. citizenship.

Sincerely,

Dr. Emilio T. González  
Director



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

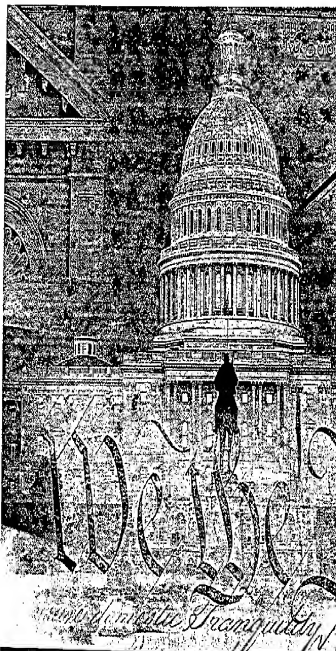
## Clarification Sheet

for the publication

*Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons*

Clarification posted May 19, 2006

Question	Page Number	Clarification
80	12	The answer to Question 80 is incomplete. It should read as follows: <i>The rights of freedom of religion, of speech, of the press, of assembly, and to petition the Government.</i>



## كيفية الحصول على دليل "أهلاً وسهلاً إلى الولايات المتحدة: دليل للمهاجرين الجدد"

تستطيع طبع نسخة من دليل "أهلاً وسهلاً إلى الولايات المتحدة" من الانترنت، لكن إذا لم يكن لديك جهاز كمبيوتر في منزلك، تستطيع استعمال أحد أجهزة

الكمبيوتر في إحدى المكتبات العامة في منطقتك أو في أحد مقاهي الإنترنت "Internet café".

يستطيع الموقعون الدائمون الجدد طلب نسخة مجانية من الدليل بالإنجليزية من دائرة خدمات الجنسية والهجرة الأمريكية (USCIS) خط

الاستمارات بالاتصال على الرقم 1-800-870-3676.

للحصول على المزيد من المعلومات من دائرة USCIS:

• يرجى زيارة موقعنا على الانترنت على العنوان: <http://www.uscis.gov>

• يرجى الاتصال بـ "المركز الوطني لخدمات الزبائن" [National Customer Service Center]

التابع لنا على الرقم:

1-800-375-5283 أو 1-800-767-1833

(لضعفاء السمع).

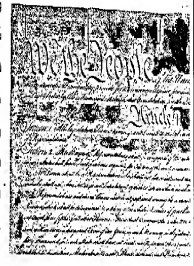
• للحصول على استمارات دائرة خدمات الجنسية والهجرة الأمريكية، يرجى الاتصال بـ 1-800-870-3676

## مشاركة في نشاطات منطقتك المحلية

الحكومة الأمريكية هي حكومة للشعب ومنه ومن أجله، مما يعني أن الشعب يستطيع رسم بنية الحكومة وسياساتها. فكل شخص يلعب دوراً هاماً في منطقتك المحلية.

وانت تستطيع بدورك المشاركة في نشاطات منطقتك المحلية من خلال الهئات

المحلية، أو مكان ممارسة ديانتك أو عملك، أو حبلتك، أو دارس أولادك. ويقدم لك دليل "أهلاً وسهلاً إلى الولايات المتحدة" بعض الأفكار عن المشاركة في نشاطات منطقتك المحلية والمزيد من المعلومات عن الحياة في هذا الوطن.



## كيف تصبح مواطناً أمريكياً

يقدم دليل "أهلاً وسهلاً إلى الولايات المتحدة" معلومات هامة للمهاجرين الذين يريدون أن يصبحوا مواطنين أمريكيين عن طريق عملية التجنس. ويعطيك الدليل المعلومات عن كيفية المباشرة بعملية التجنس في الوقت المناسب، والشروط المطلوبة، وكيفية تقديم الطلب لذلك باستعمال الاستمارة رقم N-400.



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

(M-617-A)

## أهلاً وسهلاً إلى الولايات المتحدة!

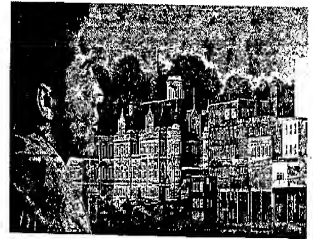
تهانينا على حصولك حديثاً على صفة "مقيم دائم" [Permanent Resident] في الولايات المتحدة.

لقد أعدت دائرة خدمات الجنسية والهجرة الأمريكية [USCIS أو U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services] التي تشكل جزءاً من وزارة الأمن الوطني الأمريكية [DHS أو U.S. Department of Homeland Security] دليلاً يحتوي على المعلومات والخدمات التي أنت بحاجة إليها كي تستقر في الولايات المتحدة، عنوانه "أهلاً وسهلاً إلى الولايات المتحدة: دليل للمهاجرين الجدد".

تستطيع الحصول على الدليل الكامل باللغة:

الإنجليزية	الإسبانية	الصينية
التاغالوغية	الفيتنامية	الروسية
الكرورية	العربية	الفرنسية
البرتغالية	الكريولية الهايتية	

على موقع دائرة خدمات الجنسية والهجرة الأمريكية على الإنترنت <http://www.uscis.gov>.



## الاستقرار في الولايات المتحدة

ستستغرق عملية الاستقرار بعض الوقت، لكن هناك سبيل متوفرة للمساعدة، إذ تستطيع الحصول على معلومات في دليل "أهلاً وسهلاً إلى الولايات المتحدة" عن:

- العثور على معلومات مجانية في مجتمعك المحلي وعلى الإنترنت

- البحث عن مكان للإقامة

- الحصول على رقم بطاقة تأمين وطني ورخصة سواقة



- الحصول على عمل

- تسجيل أبنائك في المدارس

- الحصول على العناية الصحية

- العثور على أماكن تقدم دروس تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية وتعليم الراشدين

- الإعداد للحالات الطارئة

- العثور على هيئات مجتمعية تساعد المهاجرين

## حقوقك ومسؤولياتك كمقيم دائم

من المهم جداً أن تفهم حقوقك ومسؤولياتك بصفتك مقيماً دائماً، إذا يتضمن دليل "أهلاً وسهلاً إلى الولايات المتحدة" معلومات لمساعدتك على فهم حقوقك، بما فيها تلك التي في الدستور الأمريكي ووثيقة الحقوق. وتستطيع أيضاً الحصول على معلومات عن القوانين الفدرالية التي تحميك من التمييز ضدك عندما تبحث عن مسكن أو وظيفة. وسبحذلك الدليل أيضاً من العواقب الوخيمة التي يخضع لها المقيمون الدائمون الذين يرتكبون جريمة في الولايات المتحدة أو تتم إدانتهم بها.

من المهم جداً أيضاً أن تعلم كيف تحافظ على صفة "مقيم دائم"، ف عليك أن تعلم أنواع الاستمارات التي عليك أن تعبئها، وكيف تتقيد بالمواعيد الهامة، وأنواع النشاطات التي يجب تجنبها إذا أردت أن تصبح مواطناً أمريكياً في وقت لاحق. ودليل "أهلاً وسهلاً إلى

الولايات المتحدة" يعطيك معلومات عن كيفية تلبية شروط:

تقديم كشوفات التصريح عن ضرائبك الفدرالية لمصلحة ضريبة الدخل

[Internal Revenue Service أو IRS].

- وللحصول على المزيد من المعلومات، اتصل بـ 1-800-829-1040 أو اطلع على <http://www.irs.gov>.

التسجيل في "الخدمة العسكرية الإلزامية" [Selective Service] (للكل من سن 18 إلى 26).

- للتسجيل أو الحصول على المزيد من المعلومات، اتصل بـ 1-847-688-6888 أو اطلع على <http://www.sss.gov>.



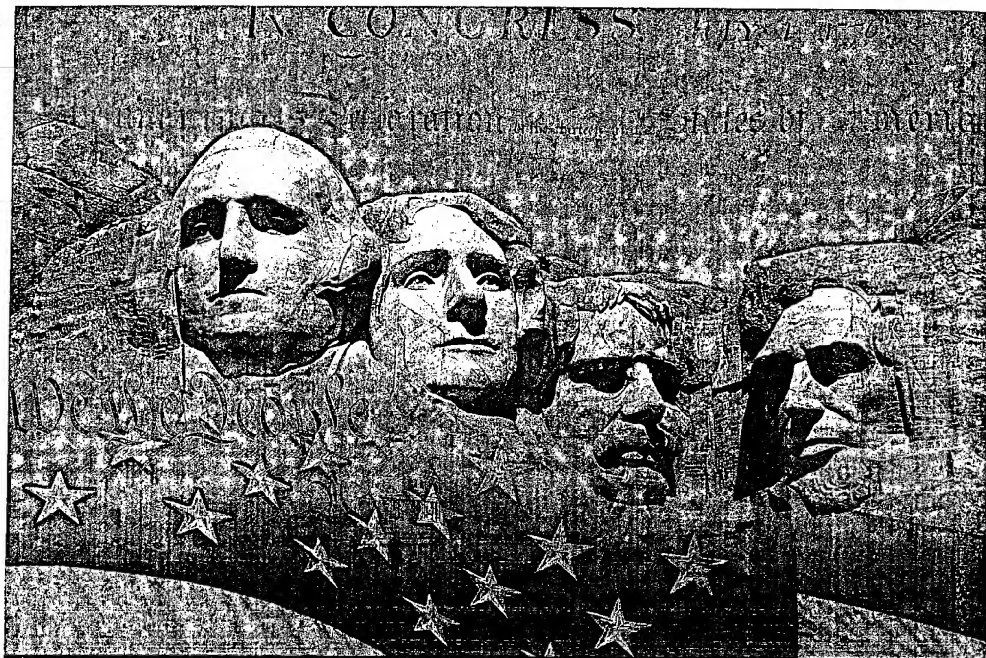
تزويد وزارة الأمن الوطني بعنوانك الجديد في غضون 10 أيام بعد انتقالك.

- للحصول على الاستمارة رقم AR-11 والاستعلام عن كيفية تعبئتها، اتصل بـ 1-800-870-3676 أو اطلع على <http://www.uscis.gov>.

الحفاظ على إقامتك في الولايات المتحدة.

- إذا كنت تنوي الإقامة خارج الولايات المتحدة لمدة طويلة (أكثر من 12 شهراً)، عليك ألا تقدم طلب الحصول على تصريح للسماح لك بدخول البلاد ثانية قبل المغادرة. يمكنك الحصول على الاستمارة رقم I-131 من الموقع <http://www.uscis.gov> وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، عليك ألا تقم بشكل دائم في بلد آخر.





# Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

M-638

# Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons

To become a United States citizen, you need to learn about the history of the United States and how its government works. Knowing about your new country is a very important part of being a good citizen.

*Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons* will help you learn more about U.S. history and government as you prepare for citizenship. This booklet provides short lessons, based on each of the sample civics questions that you should study for your naturalization test. As you study the Questions and Answers you can learn more about the topic by reading

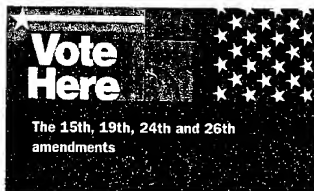
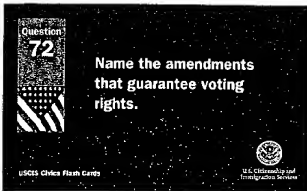
the paragraph. To help you learn words that may not be familiar, a glossary is provided at the end.

The United States has a rich, interesting history and a unique system of government. Learning more about the United States as you prepare to naturalize will help make your journey toward U.S. citizenship more meaningful.

**During your naturalization interview, you will not be tested on the additional information in the short lessons.**

## Another Option to Help You Study: Civics Flash Cards

The USCIS Civics Flash Cards are a useful study tool for those preparing to take the naturalization test. These colorful, easy-to-use cards present each of the questions that can be asked during the test. The Civics Flash Cards are available for free online at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/citizenship/>. Hard copies can be ordered from the Government Printing Office (GPO) by calling 1-866-512-1800 or by going online to <http://bookstore.gpo.gov/> and searching for "flash cards."

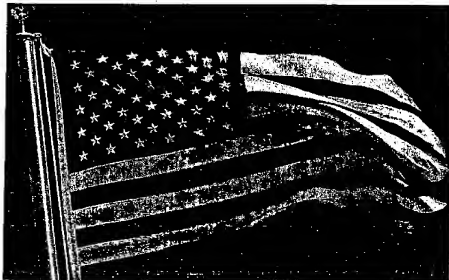


# Quick Civics Lessons

**Question 1: What are the colors of our flag?**

**Answer 1: Red, white, and blue**

We call the American flag the "Stars and Stripes." Congress chose the "Stars and Stripes" design for our flag on June 14, 1777. Americans celebrate June 14<sup>th</sup> as Flag Day. Much later, Congress explained the colors: red stands for *hardiness and valor*, white for purity and innocence, and blue for vigilance, perseverance, and justice.



**Question 2: What do the stars on the flag mean?**

**Answer 2: One for each state**

The white stars on the flag represent the United States as being like "a new constellation" in the sky. The nation was seen as a new constellation because the republican system of government was new and different in the 1770s. Very few other countries were republics at that time. In the republican system of government, leaders work to help all of the country's people. They do not act to help only a few special citizens. Since the people themselves choose these leaders, the people hold the power of government.

**Question 3: How many stars are there on our flag?**

**Answer 3: There are 50 stars on our flag.**

Each star represents a state. This is why the number of stars has changed over the years from 13 to 50. The number of stars reached 50 in 1959. In that year, Hawaii joined the United States as the 50<sup>th</sup> state.

**Question 4: What color are the stars on our flag?**

**Answer 4: The stars on our flag are white.**

The stars represent the *Founding Fathers'* view of the American experiment in democracy. To them, the goal of a republic based on individual freedom was a *noble, lofty* idea. Stars are considered a symbol of the heavens and the high, ambitious vision that our Founders were trying to reach.

**Question 5: How many stripes are there on our flag?**

**Answer 5: There are 13 stripes on our flag.**

For 18 years after becoming an independent country, the United States had only 13 states. In 1794, Kentucky and Vermont joined the United States, making the number of states 15. At that time, Congress increased the number of stars and stripes on the flag from 13 to 15. The number of stripes was not changed again to 13 for many years.

**Question 6: What do the stripes on the flag represent?**

**Answer 6: The first 13 states**

In 1818, Congress decided that the number of stripes on the flag should always be 13. This would honor the original states, no matter how many new states would join the United States later. These original 13 states had been colonies of Great Britain before America's independence.

**Question 7: What colors are the stripes on the flag?**

**Answer 7: The stripes on the flag are red and white.**

The pre-independence American flags also had stripes. The "Boston Liberty" flag, for example, was flown in the early part of the American Revolution. This flag was flown by a famous group of patriots called the Sons of Liberty. This group and others felt that British laws treated the American colonists unfairly. They were also angry at being taxed by the British while having no say, or representation, in the government.

**Question 8: How many states are there in the Union (the United States)?**

**Answer 8: 50 states**

There are 50 states in the Union. The first 13 states, which were the original 13 colonies, were Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Georgia, Delaware, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The last state to join the Union was Hawaii.

**Question 9: What do we celebrate on the 4th of July?**

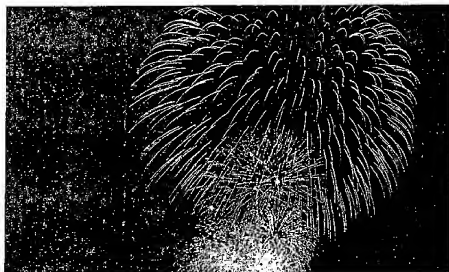
**Answer 9: Independence Day**

Congress voted for the United States to become independent from Great Britain on July 2, 1776. However, we celebrate Independence Day on July 4<sup>th</sup>. This is because it took two days for Congress to vote to accept an official Declaration of Independence. This Declaration was written by Thomas Jefferson and edited by Congress. It explained why the American colonies were separating from their British ruler. The 4<sup>th</sup> of July is now considered to be the birthday of America. We celebrate with parades, fireworks, the playing of patriotic songs, and live readings of the Declaration of Independence.

**Question 10: Independence Day celebrates independence from whom?**

**Answer 10: Independence from Great Britain**

The decision to break from the British was not an easy choice for many colonists. However, Great Britain's "repeated injuries" against the Americans, as noted in the Declaration of Independence, convinced many to join the rebellion. After years of difficult fighting, the colonists went on to win their freedom.



Fireworks on the 4th of July

**Question 11: What country did we fight during the Revolutionary War?**

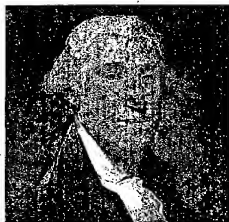
**Answer 11: We fought Great Britain in the Revolutionary War.**

The American colonists' anger had been building for years before the Revolutionary War began. The Americans fought this war because they wanted freedom from British rule. The fighting of the war ended in 1781, after the Battle of Yorktown. The Americans, with French help, won this battle. It was not until 1783 that the British fully accepted United States independence.

**Question 12: Who was the first president of the United States?**

**Answer 12: George Washington**

We honor George Washington as the first President of the United States. After leading the military campaign to win American independence, Washington played an important role in the new nation's formation. He was the elected leader of the meeting, or convention, that was held to create the Constitution. Later on, Washington's service as the first



George Washington

U.S. President set a tradition for future presidents to follow. For example, he refused to try to become President more than twice. This began the very democratic tradition of a President not serving more than two terms. This limit is now required by a Constitutional Amendment.

**Question 13: Who is the President of the United States today?**

**Answer 13: George W. Bush**



President Bush

George W. Bush is the 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States. He was the Governor of Texas before winning the presidential election of 2000. Four years later, Bush won election to a second term as President. The name of the President's wife, called "the First Lady," is Laura. President Bush's father was the 41<sup>st</sup> President of the United States. His name is also George. He was President from 1989 until 1993.

**Question 14: Who is the Vice President of the United States today?**

**Answer 14: Dick Cheney**

Richard B. (Dick) Cheney is the 46<sup>th</sup> Vice President of the United States. Vice President Cheney grew up in Wyoming. He later represented the people of Wyoming in the U.S. Congress. As Vice President, Cheney is President of the U.S. Senate and a top advisor to the President.

**Question 15: Who elects the President of the United States?**

**Answer 15: The Electoral College**

The Electoral College is not a place or a school. It is a process that was designed by the writers of the Constitution to select presidents. It came from a compromise between the President being elected directly by the people and the President being chosen by Congress. Combining these ideas, the American people vote for a "college" of electors, who then meet to choose the President. Today, the people of each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia vote for the electors in November. The electors then officially vote for the President in December.

**Question 16: Who becomes President if the President dies?**

**Answer 16: The Vice President**

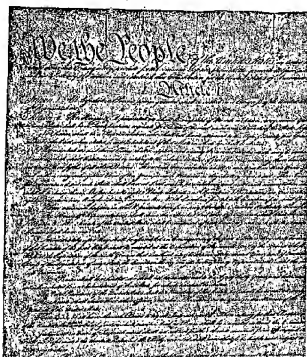
The Vice President is first in line to take over as President. This has happened eight times in U.S. history. William Henry Harrison died in office in 1841. Zachary Taylor died in office in 1850. Abraham Lincoln was killed in office in

1865. James Garfield was killed in office in 1881. William McKinley was killed in office in 1901. Warren Harding died in office in 1923. Franklin Roosevelt died in office in 1945. John F. Kennedy was killed in office in 1963.

**Question 17: What is the Constitution?**

**Answer 17: The supreme law of the land**

The U.S. Constitution has lasted longer than any other country's constitution. It is the basic legal framework establishing the U.S. government. Every person and every agency and department of government must follow the Constitution. This is why it is called the



The Constitution of the United States

"supreme law of the land." Under this system, the powers of the national government are limited to those written in the Constitution. The guiding principle behind this system is often called the rule of law.

**Question 18: What do we call changes to the Constitution?**

**Answer 18: Amendments**

It is not easy for the Constitution to be changed, or amended. First, two-thirds of the Senate and two-thirds of the House of Representatives must vote to approve an Amendment. Then, three-fourths of the states must approve the Amendment. This process is called ratification. Six times an Amendment has passed the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, but was not approved by enough states to be ratified.

**Question 19: How many changes, or amendments, are there to the Constitution?**

**Answer 19: Twenty-seven amendments**

The first Amendments to the Constitution were added in 1791. These original ten Amendments are called the Bill of Rights. Since the Bill of Rights passed, 17 more Amendments have been added. The 27<sup>th</sup> Amendment is the most recent addition. It was added in 1992 and addresses how Senators and Representatives are paid. Interestingly, Congress first discussed this Amendment back in 1789.

**Question 20: What are the three branches of our government?**

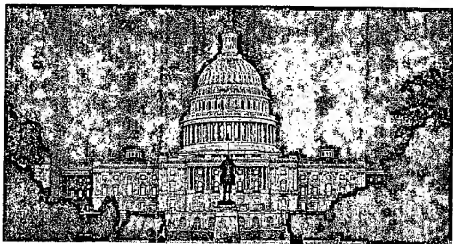
**Answer 20: Executive, Judicial, and Legislative**

The Constitution divides the government's power among three branches. These branches operate under a system of checks and balances. This means that each branch can block, or threaten to block, the action of another branch. This way, no one branch can grow too powerful and harm the liberties of citizens. For example, the Senate can block a treaty signed by the President, or the U.S. Supreme Court can reject a law passed by Congress. In the first example, the legislative branch is "checking" the executive, and in the second, the judicial branch is "checking" the legislative.

**Question 21: What is the legislative branch of our Government?**

**Answer 21: Congress**

The main job of Congress is to make *federal* laws. Congress is divided into two parts—the Senate and the House of Representatives. By dividing Congress into two parts, the Constitution put the checks and balances idea to work within the legislative branch. Each part of Congress makes sure that the other does not become too powerful. These two "check" each other because both must agree for a law to be made. A Congress divided into two parts is known as a bicameral legislature.



The Capitol in Washington, DC, where Congress meets to make federal laws

**Question 22: What makes up Congress?**

**Answer 22: The Senate and the House of Representatives**

Specific powers are assigned to each of these chambers. Only the Senate has the power to reject a treaty signed by the President or a person chosen to serve on the Supreme Court. Only the House of Representatives has the power to begin considering a bill that makes Americans pay taxes. Also, only the House has the power to make a President go to trial for a crime against the United States. This is called impeachment.

**Question 23: Who makes the Federal laws in the United States?**

**Answer 23: Congress**

A federal law is a rule that all people living in the United States must follow. Every law begins as a proposal made by a member of Congress. Tax proposals must begin in the House. Other types of proposals can be made by any Senator or Representative. When the Senate or House begins to debate the proposal, it is called a bill. If the President signs the bill, it becomes a federal law.

**Question 24: Who elects Congress?**

**Answer 24: The citizens of the United States**

The nation is divided into 435 Congressional districts. The people of each district are represented by a member of the House of Representatives. The people of each state also vote for two U.S. Senators. The term of office for members of the House of Representatives is two years. The term for Senators is six years. Before 1913, state legislatures elected the U.S. Senators to represent that state. Since then, the people of a state have directly elected their two Senators.

**Question 25: How many Senators are there in Congress?**

**Answer 25: There are 100 Senators in Congress, 2 from each state.**

One reason the Senate was created was to give states with few people equal power to states with many people. With two Senators representing each state, states with small populations have the same Senate representation as states with large populations. In contrast, in the House, states with more people have more Representatives and therefore more power.

**Question 26: For how long do we elect each Senator?**

**Answer 26: 6 years**

The writers of the Constitution wanted Senators to be independent from public opinion. A longer, six-year term would give them this protection. They also wanted the Senate to balance the two-year term of the members of the House, who would more closely follow public opinion. The Constitution puts no limit on the number of terms a Senator may serve.

**Question 27: Name two Senators from your state.**

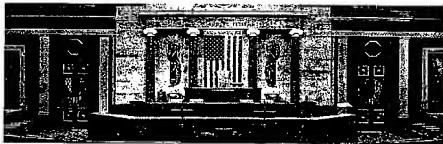
**Answer 27: The answer to this question depends on where you live.**

For a complete list of United States Senators and the states they represent, go to <http://www.senate.gov>.

**Question 28: How many voting members are in the House of Representatives?**

**Answer 28: There are 435 voting members in the House of Representatives.**

The House has had 435 members since 1912. Since that year, however, the distribution among the states of those 435 members has changed. This is because the number of Representatives from each state is re-calculated every ten years. New information from the Census is used in this re-calculation. If one state gains many residents while another state loses many, the first state could get one or more new Representatives, while the other state could lose one or more. But the overall number of U.S. Representatives does not change.



The U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, DC

**Question 29: For how long do we elect each member of the House of Representatives?**

**Answer 29: For 2 years**

People living in a Representative's district are called constituents. Representatives tend to reflect the views of his or her constituents. If Representatives do not do this, they may be voted out of office. The writers of the Constitution believed that short two-year terms and frequent elections keep Representatives closer to their constituents and public opinion. The Constitution puts no limit on the number of terms a Representative may serve.

**Question 30: Who is the head of the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government?**

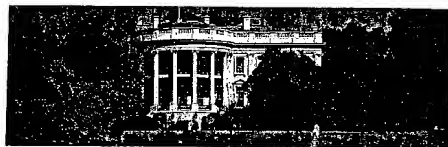
**Answer 30: The President**

The President is both the head of state and the head of government. Presidential powers include the ability to sign treaties with other countries and select ambassadors to represent the United States abroad. As head of the executive branch, the President names the top leaders of the federal departments. However, the Senate has the power to reject the President's choices. This limit on the power of the President is another example of checks and balances.

**Question 31: For how long is the President elected?**

**Answer 31: The President is elected for 4 years.**

Early American leaders felt that the head of the British government, the king, had too much power. Because of



The President's home, the White House

this, they limited the powers of the head of the new U.S. government. They decided that the President would have to be elected by the people every four years.

**Question 32: What is the highest part of the Judiciary Branch of our Government?**

**Answer 32: The Supreme Court**

Many different federal courts make up the judiciary branch. The Constitution created the Supreme Court, but gave Congress the right to create lower federal courts. District and appellate courts are two examples of lower courts. Decisions made by these courts can be reviewed and overturned by the higher-ranking Supreme Court. The lower courts are spread throughout the country, in various districts and circuits.

**Question 33: What are the duties of the Supreme Court?**

**Answer 33: To interpret and explain the laws**



The Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court makes sure that laws are consistent with the Constitution. If they are not, the Court can declare them unconstitutional and therefore not valid. In this case, the laws are rejected. The Court has the last word on all cases that have to do with federal laws and treaties. It also rules on other cases, such as those between states.

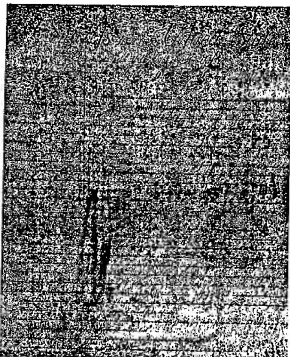
**Question 34: What is the supreme law of the United States?**

**Answer 34: The Constitution**

The government set up by the Constitution is based on the consent, or agreement, of the governed. The introduction to the Constitution reflects this idea. This introduction is called the Preamble. It states that "We the People" establish the Constitution. The actual system of the U.S. government is a representative democracy. The Constitution also reflects the idea of consent of the governed. The "governed"—all U.S. citizens—choose representatives to make the nation's laws and a president to lead the executive branch.

**Question 35: What is the Bill of Rights?**

**Answer 35: The first 10 amendments to the Constitution**



The Bill of Rights

When the Constitution was first written, it did not focus on individual rights. Its goal was to create the system and structure of government. Many Americans, including a group called the Anti-Federalists, wanted a specific list of things the government could not do.

James Madison

responded with a list of individual rights and limits of government. Some of these included citizens' rights to practice their religion freely, to speak and publish freely, and to complain publicly about anything they wanted. The list was in the form of changes, or Amendments, to the Constitution. These Amendments were ratified in 1791. They soon became known as the Bill of Rights.

**Question 36: What is the capital of the state you live in?**

**Answer 36: The answer to this question depends on the state where you reside. To learn the capital of your state, go to <http://www.firstgov.gov> and select the state government link.**



**Question 37: Who is the current Governor of the state you live in?**

**Answer 37: The answer to this question depends on where you live. To learn the name of the Governor of your state, go to <http://www.firstgov.gov> and select the state government link.**

**Question 38: Who becomes President if both the President and Vice President die?**

**Answer 38: The Speaker of the House**

The answer to this question has changed throughout history. At first, following a 1791 law, the *Senate President Pro Tempore* was second in line to become President after the Vice President. Later, Congress passed a law making the *Secretary of State* next in line if the President and Vice President died.

However, in 1947 Congress returned to the original idea of a Congressional leader being next in line. This time, though, the *Speaker of the House* was chosen to be the next in line after the President and Vice President.

**Question 39: Who is Chief Justice of the Supreme Court?**

**Answer 39:** John G. Roberts, Jr.

John G. Roberts, Jr. is currently the 17<sup>th</sup> Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. President George W. Bush nominated him for this position following the death of former Chief Justice William Rehnquist in September 2005. At age 50, Judge Roberts became the youngest Chief Justice since 1801, when John Marshall was confirmed at the age of 45. Previously, Judge Roberts served on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

**Question 40: What were the original 13 states?**

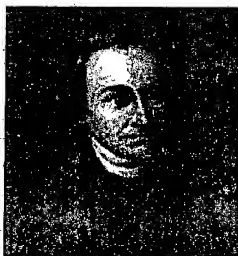
**Answer 40:** Virginia, Massachusetts, Maryland, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Georgia

These 13 states had been colonies before the United States became an independent country. The British king ruled the 13 colonies, but Great Britain was very far away and focused on domestic affairs or wars in Europe, not on the colonies. Therefore, even before their independence, the colonies largely governed themselves. This was done partly through colonial legislatures. These legislatures were elected by the colonists. Until the American Revolution, though, most colonists considered the British king their true ruler.

**Question 41: Who said, "Give me liberty or give me death"?**

**Answer 41:** Patrick Henry

Patrick Henry was a fiery leader of the American Revolution. Before U.S. independence, he spoke out for colonial rights within the Virginia legislature. Henry represented Virginia in both the First and Second Continental Congresses. He helped push the colonies toward independence. In 1775, when the Revolutionary War began, Henry convinced Virginia to join the colonists' side. Later he became the first governor of Virginia.

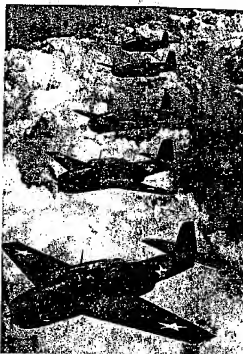


American patriot Patrick Henry

**Question 42: Name some countries that were our enemy during World War II.**

**Answer 42:** Germany, Italy, and Japan

The United States officially went to war on December 8, 1941. President Franklin Roosevelt, as Commander-in-Chief of the military, obtained an official declaration of war from Congress. This was one day after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, an American naval base in Hawaii. Japan's partners in the Axis, Italy and Germany, then declared war on the United States, Great Britain, and their Allies. The Allies fought against the German Nazis, the Italian Fascists, and Japan's military empire. This was very difficult for the United States, which had to fight wars in both the Pacific region and Europe.



World War II airplanes

**Question 43: What was the 49th state added to our Union (the United States)?**

**Answer 43:** Alaska

In 1867, the U.S. government bought the land of Alaska from Russia, paying \$7,200,000. Secretary of State William Seward made the decision to buy Alaska. Ninety-two years later, in 1959, Alaska finally became a state. The people of Alaska now honor Seward for his commitment to their state. They celebrate Seward's Day every March.

**Question 44: How many full terms can a President serve?**

**Answer 44:** Two full terms

The first U.S. President, George Washington, only ran for President twice. Washington felt that one person should not serve as President for a very long time. Following this tradition, no future President served for more than two terms until Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt was elected to four terms. Not long after he died, the Constitution was amended so that a President could only serve two terms.

**Question 45: Who was Martin Luther King, Jr.?**

**Answer 45:** A civil rights leader

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Baptist minister and civil rights hero. During his short life he did much to make America a more fair, tolerant, and equal nation. He was the main leader



of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Because of this movement, civil rights laws that protected voting rights and ended segregation were passed. King believed in the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. He advanced the idea that every citizen deserves America's promise of equality and justice.



The civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Question 46: What are some of the requirements to be eligible to become President?**

**Answer 46:** A candidate for President must

- be a native-born, not naturalized, citizen,
- be at least 35 years old, and
- have lived in the U.S. for at least 14 years.

The writers of the Constitution wanted the President to be an experienced leader with a strong connection to the United States. The eligibility requirements try to make sure that this happens. In *Federalist Paper #64*, John Jay wrote that the President should be a man "of whom the people have had time to form a judgment." This, Jay explains, is one main reason for the eligibility requirements. The youngest person in American history to become President was Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt entered the White House when he was 42 years old.

**Question 47: Why are there 100 Senators in the United States Senate?**

**Answer 47:** Each state elects 2 Senators.

The writers of the Constitution wanted the two parts of Congress to have different characters. By giving each state only two Senators, the writers made sure that the Senate would be small. This would keep the Senate more orderly than the larger House of Representatives. As James Madison wrote in *Federalist Paper #63*, the Senate should be a "temperate and respectable body of citizens" that operates in a "cool and deliberate" way.

**Question 48: Who nominates judges for the Supreme Court?**

**Answer 48:** The President nominates judges for the Supreme Court.

The process of nominating a Supreme Court Justice is an example of checks and balances. The executive branch has the power to choose the members of the judicial branch of

the federal government. The legislative branch can check this power, since the Senate must confirm the President's *nominee*. However, once on the Court, the Justices have lifelong terms. Therefore, the judicial branch's power and independence is protected.

**Question 49: How many Supreme Court Justices are there?**

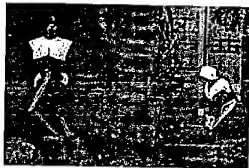
**Answer 49:** There are 9 Supreme Court Justices.

The number of Justices is not established in the Constitution. In the past, it has been as high as ten and as low as six. Now, there are eight Associate Justices and one Chief Justice. The current Associate Justices are Ruth Bader Ginsburg, David Souter, Clarence Thomas, Stephen Breyer, Antonin Scalia, John Paul Stevens, Anthony Kennedy, and Samuel Alito. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is John Roberts.

**Question 50: Why did the Pilgrims come to America?**

**Answer 50:** To gain religious freedom

In the early 1600s, the Pilgrims left England. They first went to Holland, where they lived for a few years, then America. Many English settlers sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to the American colonies during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Many came for political freedom or, like the Pilgrims, the right to practice their religion. Others came because of economic opportunity. These freedoms and opportunities often



Pilgrims

did not exist in the home countries of these settlers. For them, the American colonies meant a new chance in life and the freedom to live as they wanted.

**Question 51: What is the executive of a state government called?**

**Answer 51:** The Governor

The position of governor is not the same in every state. The number of years that a governor is elected to serve—called a term—may differ from state to state. The governor's job within a state government is similar to the President's job within the federal government. However, the state laws that a governor carries out are different from the federal laws that the President carries out. The Constitution says that certain issues are covered by federal, not state, laws. All other issues are covered by state laws. This system is known as federalism. Federalism forces states and the federal government to share power on many issues.

**Question 52: What is the head executive of a city government called?**

**Answer 52: The Mayor**

Like a Governor or the President, a mayor usually shares power with a legislative body. In city government, this is often called the City Council. Cities in the United States are located within larger regions called counties. Usually, each county has its own government.



**Question 53: What holiday was celebrated for the first time by American colonists?**

**Answer 53: Thanksgiving**

The first Thanksgiving feast was held in Massachusetts in 1621. The Pilgrims who had traveled to this colony gave thanks for a successful fall harvest. They learned from local Native Americans, or Indians, which crops would grow and how best to grow them. The Indians' lessons helped the Pilgrims grow enough food to survive the winter. In 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt signed a bill that officially made the last Thursday of November Thanksgiving Day.

**Question 54: Who was the main writer of the Declaration of Independence?**

**Answer 54: Thomas Jefferson**

Jefferson was a Virginia lawyer and planter when he wrote the Declaration in 1776. He would become a very important political leader and thinker. Before becoming President, he was the governor of Virginia and the first U.S. Secretary of State. Jefferson strongly supported individual rights, especially freedom of religion. Because he wanted to protect these rights, Jefferson opposed a strong national government. Instead, he argued for states' rights. He wanted America to be a nation of small farmers who actively participated in their democracy.



Thomas Jefferson

**Question 55: When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?**

**Answer 55: July 4, 1776**

In 1774, representatives from 12 of the colonies met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for the First Continental Congress. They protested British laws that treated them unfairly. They also began to organize an army. After fighting began between the colonists and the British army, a Second Continental Congress met. This group appointed Jefferson and others to create the Declaration of Independence. This document stated that, if a government does not protect the rights of the people, the people can create a new government. Following this idea, the colonists broke from their British rulers and formed a new country.

**Question 56: What are some of the basic beliefs of the Declaration of Independence?**

**Answer 56: That all men are created equal and have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness**

The Declaration is based on ideas about freedom and individual rights. For Jefferson and the Founding Fathers, people are born with natural rights that no government can take away. Government exists only to protect these rights. Because the people voluntarily give up power to a government, they can take that power back. The British government was not protecting the rights of the colonists, they took back their power and separated from Great Britain.

**Question 57: What is the national anthem of the United States?**

**Answer 57: The Star-Spangled Banner**

During the War of 1812, British soldiers invaded the United States. On the night of September 13, 1814, British warships bombed Fort McHenry. This fort protected the city of Baltimore. An American named Francis Scott Key watched the fierce bombing, and thought that the fort would fall. As the sun rose the next morning, Key looked toward the fort. He saw that the American flag above the fort was still flying, proving that the United States had not been defeated. Key immediately wrote the words to "The Star-Spangled Banner."

**Question 58: Who wrote The Star-Spangled Banner?**

**Answer 58: Francis Scott Key**

Key first wrote the words to "The Star-Spangled Banner" as a poem. He named this poem "The Defence [sic] of Fort M'Henry." Many years later music was added to the words of the poem. This music came from a piece called "Anacreon in Heaven." The combination of the poem with the music created the song that is now so well-known. It was not until 1931 that Congress passed a law naming "The Star-Spangled Banner" the official national anthem.

**Question 59: What is the minimum voting age in the United States?**

**Answer 59: 18 is the minimum voting age.**

For most of U.S. history, Americans had to be at least 21 years old to vote. By the 1970s, many people thought that if someone was old enough to fight in a war, he or she should be old enough to vote. So, in 1971 the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment changed the minimum voting age to 18.

**Question 60: Who signs bills into law?**

**Answer 60: The President**

A bill is a proposed law being considered by Congress. Both parts of Congress—the Senate and the House of Representatives—must pass the same version of the bill. When they do so, the bill goes to the President to be signed into law. The President does, however, have veto power. This means that the President can reject a bill passed by Congress. If two-thirds of the House and two-thirds of the Senate vote to pass the bill again, though, the bill becomes a law. This process is called overriding the President's veto.

**Question 61: What is the highest court in the United States?**

**Answer 61: The Supreme Court**

The U.S. Supreme Court exercises complete authority over all federal courts. It has the final word on cases heard in federal court. The Supreme Court's interpretations of federal laws and of the Constitution are final. The Supreme Court is limited, though, in its power over states. It cannot interpret state law or state constitutions. The Court can, however, decide that a state law conflicts with federal law or the U.S. Constitution and is, thus, invalid.

**Question 62: Who was President during the Civil War?**

**Answer 62: Abraham Lincoln**

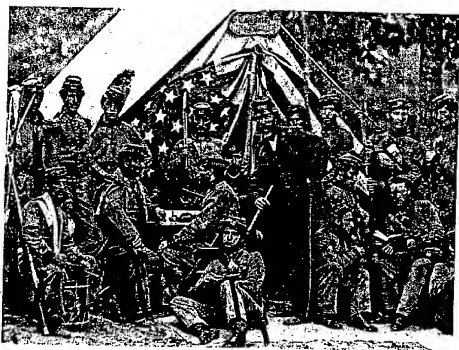


The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC

northern states. Lincoln was a lawyer, legislator, and celebrated speaker before he was President. He became nationally famous for his debates with Senator Stephen A.

We honor Abraham Lincoln because he led the nation during the Civil War, a very difficult time. The war began when a group of southern states, known as the Confederacy, tried to separate from the United States. They wanted to preserve slavery and their farm-based economic system. This system was threatened by the

Douglas. These took place when Lincoln and Douglas ran against each other for Illinois' U.S. Senate seat in 1858.



Civil War Engineers in the Union Army

**Question 63: What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?**

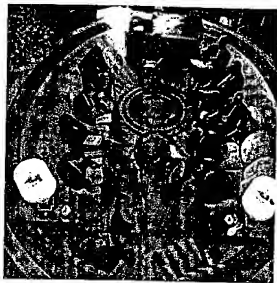
**Answer 63: The Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves.**

President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in the middle of the Civil War, in 1863. It freed the slaves in the rebelling Confederate states. In 1865, the northern soldiers, known as the Union soldiers, defeated the soldiers from the South, known as the Confederate soldiers. The bitter, bloody Civil War was over, and the Union had been preserved. Soon afterwards, the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment made the abolition of slavery part of the Constitution.

**Question 64: What special group advises the President?**

**Answer 64: The Cabinet advises the President.**

The Constitution says that the leaders of the executive departments should advise the President. These department leaders, most of them called Secretaries, make up the Cabinet. Throughout history, Presidents have been able to change who makes up the Cabinet. For instance, when Congress created the Department of Homeland Security, President George W. Bush added the leader of this department to his Cabinet.



A meeting with the President in the Oval Office

**Question 65:** Which President is called the "Father of our Country"?

**Answer 65:** George Washington

Washington was a brave military general, a respected leader of the American Revolution, and our first President. His leadership was very important during America's transition from war and revolution to stability under the new government. After his victory over the British army, Washington retired. He reluctantly left this retirement when problems arose with the new country's system of government. Washington helped lead the effort to create a Constitution for the United States.

**Question 66:** Which President was the first Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Army and Navy?

**Answer 66:** George Washington

The writers of the Constitution argued over how much power the new President should have. They decided that the President's powers should be limited in many ways, but that the President should be Commander-in-Chief of the military. During the Revolutionary War, George Washington had been supreme commander of the military. From this position, he led the U.S. forces to victory. This helped make him a unanimous choice to be the first President and Commander-in-Chief.

**Question 67:** What was the 50th state to be added to our Union (the United States)?

**Answer 67:** Hawaii

Hawaii is the only state completely separated from the continent of North America. There are six major islands and many smaller ones in this state. Hawaii is located in the Pacific Ocean, about 2,400 miles from Los Angeles, California. The islands officially became a U.S. territory in 1898. For many decades after this, Hawaiians pushed for Congress to make the territory a state. This finally happened in 1959.

**Question 68:** Who helped the Pilgrims in America?

**Answer 68:** The American Indians/Native Americans

At the time of the Pilgrims' arrival, great Indian tribes such as the Navajo, Sioux, Cherokee, and Seminoles lived in America. When the Pilgrims came to America, they settled in an area where a tribe called the Wampanoag lived. The Wampanoag taught the Pilgrims important skills, such as how to grow corn, beans, and squash. As more Europeans moved to America, relations with the Indians were not always peaceful. Eventually, after much bloodshed, the settlers defeated the Indian tribes and took much of their land.

**Question 69:** What is the name of the ship that brought the Pilgrims to America?

**Answer 69:** The Mayflower

The Mayflower left from Plymouth, England, on September 6, 1620. After 65 days crossing the ocean, the ship landed in what is now the state of Massachusetts. Soon after, the Pilgrims signed an agreement called the Mayflower Compact. In it, the Pilgrims agreed to unite into a "Civil Body Politic." The Compact did not set up a governing system, as the Constitution later would. It did, however, contain the idea that the people freely agreed to live under the government. The power of this government came directly from the people themselves.

**Question 70:** What were the 13 original states of the United States called before they were states?

**Answer 70:** Colonies

European countries began taking control of areas of America in the 1500s. These European-controlled areas were called colonies. England's first successful American colony was Virginia. Virginia began in 1607 as a small camp at Jamestown. Later, Pennsylvania was founded as a home for a religious group, the Quakers. This group opposed war and rejected all rituals and oaths. The Dutch colony of New Netherlands was captured by British forces in 1664 and renamed New York. The 13 American colonies would later unite into one country, but the history of each one was quite distinct.

**Question 71:** What group has the power to declare war?

**Answer 71:** Congress has the power to declare war.

Congress has formally declared war 11 times. The Senate vote for war was very close two of these times. These close votes took place before the War of 1812 and the Spanish-American War. Congress has not declared war since the United States entered World War II in 1941. However, seven times since then Congress has authorized military action. This step reflects the democratic tradition of the legislative branch approving the President's use of troops.

**Question 72:** Name the amendments that guarantee or address voting rights.

**Answer 72:** The 15th, 19th, 24th and 26th amendments

The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment gave women the ability to vote. It was a result of decades of hard work by the women's rights movement. This was also known as the women's suffrage movement. The 15<sup>th</sup>



Suffragette parade in New York City in 1912

Amendment was written after the Civil War and the end of slavery. It allowed all American men of all races to vote. Some leaders of southern states were upset that the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment allowed African-Americans to vote. These leaders designed fees called poll taxes to stop them from voting. The 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment made it illegal to stop someone from voting because he or she did not pay a poll tax. The 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment lowered the voting age to 18.

**Question 73: In what year was the Constitution written?**

**Answer 73: The Constitution was written in 1787.**

Before the U.S. Constitution, the Articles of Confederation was the document that established the U.S. system of government. The Articles were ratified in 1783. By 1786, many American leaders had become unhappy with this document. The national government it set up was simply too weak. In 1787, Congress decided that a convention would meet in Philadelphia to revise the Articles. At this meeting, the leaders quickly decided to go beyond revising the Articles. Instead, they wrote a whole new governing document—the Constitution.

**Question 74: What are the first 10 amendments to the Constitution called?**

**Answer 74: The Bill of Rights**

The first ten Amendments to the Constitution, ratified in 1791, became known as the Bill of Rights. The Bill, using principles from the Declaration of Independence, guarantees the rights of individuals and limits government power. The first eight Amendments set out individual rights, such as the freedom of expression, the right to bear arms, freedom from search without warrant, freedom to not be tried twice for the same crime, the right to not testify against yourself, the right to trial by a jury of peers, the right to an attorney, and protection against excessive fines and unusual punishments. The last two Amendments in the Bill of Rights address the rights of the people in their relationship with the state and federal governments.

**Question 75: Whose rights are guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights?**

**Answer 75: All people living in the United States**

One reason that millions of immigrants have come to America is this guarantee of rights. The 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment guarantees everyone in the United States equal protection under the law. This is true no matter what color your skin is, what language you speak, or what religion you practice. The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, ratified after the Civil War, expanded this guarantee of rights. No state would be able to abridge, or block, the rights of any of its citizens.

**Question 76: What is the introduction to the Constitution called?**

**Answer 76: The Preamble**

The preamble says: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." This means that our government has been set up by the people, so that it can be responsive to them and protect their rights. All power to govern comes from the people, who are the highest power. This idea is known as popular sovereignty.



The Preamble of the Constitution

**Question 77: Who meets in the U.S. Capitol building?**

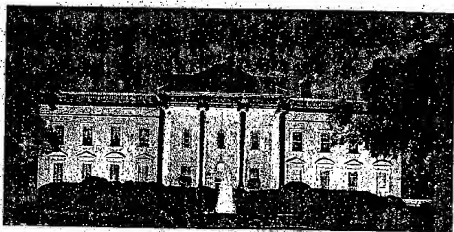
**Answer 77: Congress**

In 1791, an area between Maryland and Virginia was chosen to be the new capital city. French engineer Pierre L'Enfant was hired to plan the city. While L'Enfant chose the hill on which to build the Capitol building, he was not the one to actually design the building. A doctor, William Thornton, sent in the successful plan for the Capitol. President Washington approved this design in 1793. Congress first met in the Capitol building in November of 1800.

**Question 78: What is the name of the President's official home?**

**Answer 78: The White House**

The White House was built between 1792 and 1800. President George Washington helped choose its exact location and supervised its construction, but never actually lived there. America's second President, John Adams, was the



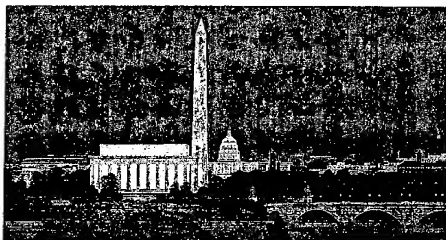
The White House in Washington, DC

first to live in the White House. Fourteen years after it was built, the White House was burned by British troops during the War of 1812. Another destructive fire took place there in 1929, when Herbert Hoover was President.

**Question 79: Where is the White House located?**

**Answer 79: Washington, DC**

When the Constitution established our nation in 1789, the city of Washington did not exist. At that time, the capital was New York City. Congress soon began discussing the location of a permanent capital city. Within Congress, representatives of northern states fought bitterly against representatives of southern states. Each side wanted the capital to be in their region. Finally, with the Compromise of 1790, the north agreed to let the capital be in the south. In return, the north was relieved of some of the debt that they owed from the Revolutionary War.



A view of Washington, DC, from Virginia, across the Potomac River. The view shows the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, and the Capitol.

**Question 80: Name one right or freedom guaranteed by the first amendment.**

**Answer 80: The rights of freedom of speech, of religion, of assembly, and to petition the Government**

These 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights are all part of a person's freedom of expression. Protecting free expression promotes open dialogue and debate on public issues, which is the foundation of democracy. Similarly, the free flow of ideas facilitates peaceful change and advances knowledge. Also in the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment, freedom of religion has two parts. It blocks Congress from setting up an official U.S. religion, and it protects citizens' rights to hold any religious belief, or none at all.

**Question 81: Who is Commander-in-Chief of the United States military?**

**Answer 81: The President**

Making the President the Commander-in-Chief shows the Founding Fathers' commitment to democratic ideals. This is because the head of the armed forces is a civilian chosen

by the people, rather than a professional military leader. In 1973, many in Congress felt that the President was using his power as Commander-in-Chief wrongly. They thought that the legislative branch was being ignored, which harmed checks and balances. So Congress passed the War Powers Act, which strengthens the role of Congress in the use of U.S. troops. President Richard Nixon vetoed this bill, but Congress overrode his veto.

**Question 82: In what month do we vote for the President?**

**Answer 82: November**

The Constitution did not set a standard national election day. There was no specified day until 1845. Even then, Congress did not set an exact date for elections. Rather, Congress set the Tuesday after the first Monday in November as Election Day. They chose Tuesday so that voters had a full day after Sunday to travel to the polls. At that time, for religious reasons, many Americans considered Sunday to be a strict day of rest. Travel on this day was not allowed.

**Question 83: In what month is the new President inaugurated?**

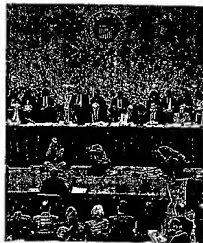
**Answer 83: January**

Before 1933, Presidents were inaugurated on March 4<sup>th</sup>. This meant that there were four months between when new Presidents were elected and when they took office. This gave the new President enough time to make the long journey to Washington, DC. By the 1930s, with the invention of automobiles and speedy trains, it was much faster to travel. The 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment officially changed the date of inauguration to January 20<sup>th</sup>. Franklin Roosevelt was the first President inaugurated on this date.

**Question 84: How many times may a Senator or Congressman be re-elected?**

**Answer 84: There is no limit.**

Several states, such as California, have term limits for members of their state legislature. Also, several states have considered limiting the number of terms that their U.S. Senators and Representatives can serve. In 1995, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that no state can do this. The Court stated that such a practice would weaken the national character of Congress. The only way that Congressional terms could be limited is through an Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.



A session of the Senate

**Question 85: What are the two major political parties in the United States today?**

**Answer 85: The Democratic and Republican parties**  
The Constitution did not establish political parties, and President George Washington specifically warned against them. Still, a split between two political groups, the Democratic-Republicans and the Federalists, appeared early in U.S. history. The current Democratic Party was created from the old Democratic-Republicans by President Andrew Jackson. The Republican Party took over from the Whigs as a major party in the 1860s. Abraham Lincoln, who was first elected in 1860, was the first Republican President. Throughout U.S. history, other parties, such as the Know-Nothing, Bull-Moose (also called Progressive), Reform, and Green Parties, have played various roles in American politics.

**Question 86: What is the executive branch of our government?**

**Answer 86: The President, the Cabinet, and departments under the cabinet members**

The job of the executive branch is to carry out, or execute, the laws of the nation. While the Constitution does discuss the Cabinet, it does not say what each federal department or agency should do. Throughout U.S. history, Congress has established the specific functions of these organizations. The State Department, Department of Homeland Security, and Environmental Protection Agency are three examples of federal departments.

**Question 87: Where does freedom of speech come from?**

**Answer 87: The Bill of Rights**

Freedom of speech is a very important civil liberty. The very first section of the Bill of Rights, the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment, guarantees this freedom. Speech can mean writing, performing, or other ways of expressing yourself. Americans have the basic right to express their views on any subject. This is true even if the government disagrees with these views. However, in certain very specific situations, freedom of expression is limited. For example, no one can shout "fire!" in a theater and cause panic.

**Question 88: What U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services form is used to apply for naturalized citizenship?**

**Answer 88: Form N-400 (Application for Naturalization)**

The Constitution did not clearly set up a naturalization process. It gave Congress the power to create "a uniform Rule of Naturalization." Beginning in 1790, Congress passed laws to govern naturalization. Since then, Congress has changed this process many times. The naturalization exam is a very important part of the current process.

**Question 89: What kind of government does the United States have?**

**Answer 89: A Republic**

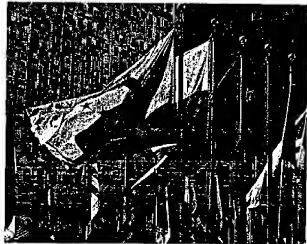
In a republic, the power that the government exercises comes from the people themselves. Government is therefore responsible for protecting the rights of all persons, not just a few special people. The way this happens in the United States is through a system of representative democracy. The people freely choose who will lead them and represent their interests. President Abraham Lincoln said, our republican government is "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

**Question 90: Name one of the purposes of the United Nations.**

**Answer 90: For countries to discuss and try to resolve world problems or to provide economic aid to many countries**

The United Nations, often called the U.N., was established in 1945, soon after World War II ended. The Charter of the United Nations names the main functions of the U.N.: "to maintain

international peace and security...to develop friendly relations among nations...(and) to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems." The two best-known parts of the U.N. are the General Assembly, made up of over 190 countries, and the Security Council, with only ten countries. The United States is one of five countries that is a permanent member of the Security Council. The President has the power to choose the Ambassador of the United States to the United Nations. The Senate must then confirm this choice.



**Question 91: Name one benefit of being a citizen of the United States.**

**Answer 91: To obtain Federal government jobs, to travel with a U.S. passport, or to petition for close relatives to come to the United States to live**

Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Earl Warren once said citizenship is "nothing less than the right to have rights." Some of the most important of these are the rights to choose your job, speak freely about your beliefs, and even disagree with government policies. At the same time, citizen responsibilities include obeying the law, voting, and serving on juries. Responsible citizens also take part in their

communities. This can mean joining the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of your child's school, running for a position on the local school board, or volunteering to help at a polling station.

**Question 92: Can the Constitution be changed?**

**Answer 92: Yes, the Constitution can be changed.**

One of the great things about the U.S. Constitution is that it is flexible, and can be changed. It is changed through an addition called an Amendment. This is why we often refer to it as the "living Constitution." The Constitution's writers wisely decided that Amendments should be rare. Because of this, the Amendment process is difficult. Still, the Constitution has been changed 27 times, with the most recent Amendment added in 1992.

**Question 93: What is the most important right granted to United States citizens?**

**Answer 93: The right to vote**

No American is required by law to vote, but exercising your right to vote is a very important part of citizenship. This is the case in any democracy. Only by voting can your voice be heard. By voting, you actively commit yourself to the democratic process. Citizens vote to be represented by leaders who share their ideas and stand up for their interests. Constitutional Amendments such as the 15<sup>th</sup> (former slaves can vote) and 19<sup>th</sup> (women can vote) greatly improved our democracy. They did this by allowing more groups of citizens to vote.



**Question 94: What is the White House?**

**Answer 94: The President's official home**

The building was not officially known as the White House until 1901, when Theodore Roosevelt was President. Before then, it was also called the "President's Palace," the "President's House," and the "Executive Mansion." The current look of the White House comes from a renovation that happened when Harry Truman was President.

**Question 95: What is the United States Capitol?**

**Answer 95: The place where Congress meets**

When Congress moved into the Capitol in 1800, much of the construction of interior rooms was not complete. It took two more years before Congress set aside funding to finish construction. Soon after, when British troops invaded Washington during the War of 1812, they set fire to the Capitol. Luckily, a heavy rainstorm saved the building from being burned down. Rebuilding the massive Capitol was not completed until 1829.

**Question 96: How many branches are there in the United States government?**

**Answer 96: There are 3 branches**

The writers of the Constitution believed that no one group in government should have total power. They thought that any person or group that has total power over government usually abuses it. In creating the U.S. system, they followed the idea of separation of powers. Along with checks and balances among the parts of government, the separation of powers into three branches prevents concentration of power. This means that the rights of citizens are better protected. The powers to make laws, to execute laws, and to interpret the laws are given to different branches. These are the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

USCIS has used the following photo with the permission of the Office of the Curator, the Supreme Court of the United States: West Facade of the Supreme Court by Fran Jantzen, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Photos of Engineers of the 8th New York State Militia, 1861, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) photo reference No. 111-B-499, and "TBF (Avengers) flying in formation over Norfolk, Va." (World War II airplanes) attributed to Lt. Comdr. Horace Bristol, September 1942, NARA photo reference 80-G-427475 are courtesy of the NARA.



## Civics Glossary

- 1) **The Allies**—The formal partnership of countries that first opposed Germany during World War I and then formed once again to oppose the Axis countries during World War II.
- 2) **Ambassador**—A person who officially represents a country somewhere outside that country.
- 3) **American Revolution**—The struggle by which the United States won independence from Great Britain. It took place from 1775 to 1783.
- 4) **Abroad**—Outside of one's home country; in a foreign country.
- 5) **The Axis**—The partnership, or alliance, of Germany, Italy, and Japan during World War II. The Axis opposed the Allies, which included the United States.
- 6) **Bill**—Legislation that has formally been introduced in Congress.
- 7) **Bloodshed**—Violence that causes injuries or death; carnage.
- 8) **Branch**—A section or division of something; a part.
- 9) **Census**—An official count of the number of persons living in a country.
- 10) **Civil liberty**—A freedom that involves limiting the power of the government over people. The individual freedoms mentioned in the Bill of Rights are often known as civil liberties.
- 11) **Civil rights**—Idea that all people of a nation or society should be treated equally.
- 12) **Civil rights movement**—An organized effort that promoted equality, political rights, and fair treatment for all Americans, no matter what their skin color was.
- 13) **Colonies**—Areas of land controlled by a foreign country.
- 14) **Compact**—A formal agreement between two (or more) groups, which often is signed.
- 15) **Compromise**—When two groups of people with opposing views on some issue come to an agreement; a deal.
- 16) **To confirm**—When the Senate approves the President's choice for an important government position.
- 17) **Constellation**—A group of stars in the night sky.
- 18) **Constituents**—People who are represented by an elected official.
- 19) **To debate**—When people argue by presenting their different opinions about something.
- 20) **Debt**—Money that someone, or some government, owes to someone else.
- 21) **Declaration**—A statement of some idea or argument.
- 22) **Declaration of war**—Official statement by one country that it is at war with another country (or countries).
- 23) **Deliberate**—Careful and methodical; taking time to think.
- 24) **Democratic**—Having to do with government by the people or the idea of political equality for all.
- 25) **Domestic affairs**—Things that go on within a country, or political issues that affect one country and its people; having nothing to do with foreign or international affairs.
- 26) **Equal**—The exact same; identical.
- 27) **Equality**—The idea that all humans have the same rights, and that none are worse or lower than others simply because of their skin color or ethnic background.
- 28) **To execute**—To carry out; to turn a written rule into an action.
- 29) **Feast**—A big, special meal, which is often held to celebrate something; banquet.
- 30) **Federal**—Having to do with the national, or central, government, rather than the government of a specific state.
- 31) **Federalist Papers**—85 essays that were printed in New York newspapers while that state was deciding whether or not to support the U.S. Constitution. The essays were written by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison in 1787 and 1788 and explained why New Yorkers should support the Constitution.
- 32) **Fiery**—Intense and forceful; passionate.
- 33) **Founding Fathers**—The men who wrote the U.S. Constitution. They created, or "founded," our system of government.
- 34) **To govern**—To set rules that people have to follow; to use political power to lead or to administer.
- 35) **Hardiness**—Ability to survive difficulties and keep going.
- 36) **Harvest**—The food that farmers get from the crops they have been growing during the summer.
- 37) **Ideals**—Basic principles or morals, which often discuss how a society should operate.
- 38) **To inaugurate**—To have gone through the ceremony of becoming President, known as inauguration.
- 39) **To invade**—To enter somewhere by force, using the military; to march into a place that belongs to your enemy.
- 40) **Jury**—Group of citizens that listens to a case in court and makes a decision about the case; each U.S. citizen is called from time to time to serve on a jury.
- 41) **Justice**<sup>1</sup>—Fairness; the state of being morally good. (Question 1)
- 42) **Justice**<sup>2</sup>—Another word for a judge, used especially for the judges who are members of the Supreme Court. (Question 39)
- 43) **Legislative**—Having to do with making laws; often refers to the group of elected officials, such as the U.S. Congress, who get together to make laws.
- 44) **Liberties**—Special freedoms or rights.
- 45) **Lofty**—Very high or elevated; grand.
- 46) **Naturalization**—The process by which a foreign-born person can become a United States citizen.
- 47) **Noble**—Having very good qualities, excellent.
- 48) **Nominee**—A person who is selected, or nominated, for an important government position.
- 49) **Oath**—A promise or vow; a pledge.
- 50) **Perseverance**—Never giving up and always going ahead.
- 51) **Pilgrims**—English settlers who came to America long ago and set up communities.
- 52) **Planter**—A farmer, especially one who operates a large farm called a plantation.

- 53) **Polling station**—Where people go to vote in elections.
- 54) **Posterity**—Future generations.
- 55) **To protest**—To publicly oppose or complain about something; to object to something.
- 56) **Ratification**—To give formal consent to; when a majority of the state legislatures approve a proposed constitutional Amendment.
- 57) **To represent**—To serve within government as the voice of the people who elected you.
- 58) **Representation**—The right or privilege of being represented by delegates in a legislative body.
- 59) **Republican**—When a country's political power comes from the citizens, not the rulers, and is put into use by representatives elected by the citizens.
- 60) **Rights**—Basic things that people can freely do; freedoms and privileges.
- 61) **Secretary of State**—The government official in charge of directing and supervising the foreign relations of the United States. He or she leads the main foreign policy agency of the United States, the Department of State. The Secretary of State is the highest-ranking head of a department in the President's Cabinet.
- 62) **Segregation**—Separation of citizens of different races.
- 63) **Senate President Pro Tempore**—The Senator who, when the Vice President is not present, presides over the Senate. This means that he or she chooses which Senators can speak to the Senate. The President Pro Tempore is the Senator from the majority political party—the party which has the most Senators—who has served in the Senate for the longest time.
- 64) **Speaker of the House**—The most powerful member of the House of Representatives, who always comes from the majority party—the party with the most Representatives. The Speaker presides over the House by deciding which Representatives can speak during debate and usually plays a very visible role in public.
- 65) **Speedy**—Fast; done quickly.
- 66) **Supreme**—Highest; cannot be challenged; ultimate.
- 67) **Temperate**—Calm, composed, and reasonable; self-controlled.
- 68) **Term**—Length of time that a government leader serves before he or she must be elected once again.
- 69) **Term limits**—A limit on the number of terms that a leader can be elected to serve. A term is the length of time that a government leader serves before he or she must be elected once again.
- 70) **Territory**—New land controlled by a government; many states were U.S. territories before officially becoming states.
- 71) **Treaty**—A formal agreement between two (or more) countries; a pact.
- 72) **Unanimous**—When everyone in a group that is deciding something decides the same way.
- 73) **Valor**—Bravery in facing great danger, especially in battle.
- 74) **Vigilance**—The state of being alert and watching out for danger.
- 75) **Whigs**—American political party of the 1800s. The party stood for business and banking interests and opposed Andrew Jackson and his Democratic Party. Four Presidents, all serving in the 1840s and 1850s, were Whigs.

To find this and other educational materials for permanent residents, please visit the Office of Citizenship website at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/citizenship/>

For more information on naturalization requirements, including information on the naturalization test, please visit <http://uscis.gov>

**Note:** Some of the content in this publication may change due to elections and appointments. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services will make every effort to update this publication in a timely manner. As of March 2006, all information in this publication is current.

An audio CD of the civics lessons comes with this booklet. While the CD plays, you can read along in the booklet. Track 1 of the CD has the questions, answers and civics lessons. Track 2 of the CD has only the questions and answers. Remember, you will not be tested on the additional information in the *Quick Civics Lessons*.



The Office of Citizenship would like to acknowledge the **Center for Civic Education** for their assistance in the development of this product. For more information on the Center and its products, visit <http://www.civiced.org>.

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA InFocus

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## IRAQ WAR: A Medical "Disaster"



By Faisal Ansari

According to a study released last month by the medical journal *The Lancet*, a staggering 655,000 Iraq deaths resulted from war-related injury and disease due to the US invasion between March 2003 and July 2006.

The shocking results of the study formed the basis for a conference at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) to address "The Medical Consequences of the War in Iraq."

SEE IRAQ WAR \* PAGE 1

## T.V. IN YOUR HOME Are your children safe?



By Abdussalam Mohamed

"Rania Naeem" was shocked when her 4-year-old daughter started rubbing herself in a sensitive area of her body and asking questions that would make any parent shudder. Her 7-year-old son Dani also gave her the creeps when he started "telling" her "stories" in areas that were off-limits to kids his age, and any other age for that matter. Rania and her husband

Kareem, who live in Lake Forest, wondered where their children acquired such behavior. It did not take them long to take action by first limiting their children's access to television and then by monitoring their behavior closely. "We immediately pulled the plug," the mother of two recalls. "We knew that the root cause of the evil was within our household."

Jennifer Kabir, a 28-year-old mother of two and a convert to Islam for eight years, shares that sentiment. "I was exposed to television very early in my life," said Kabir, who lives in Mission Viejo. "In fact, my interest in me began when I started watching a sitcom called 'Happy Days.' The show was very conservative by modern standards, but Kabir never forgot how her sexuality was triggered by something as innocent as a character in the show having several girlfriends. Kabir argues that today's television is highly sexualized and risqué, and that is why she and her husband decided not to have a television set at all ages."

On the other hand, Sarah Ascha, a 20-year-old practicing Muslim, says she and her husband

SEE TV IN YOUR HOME \* PAGE 16

## Discrimination Against Muslims at Workplace

By Anayat Durrani

A Muslim employee at a Dunkin' Donuts franchise in Wilmington, Delaware was told not to report to work wearing her headscarf. Thirty-one Muslim workers walked out of a Dell Inc. plant in Nashville, Tennessee after they were not allowed time for prayers. A Moroccan dining room manager was fired by Alben River Inn in northern California when he approached a customer for harassing a Tunisian waiter.

Workplace discrimination is on the rise against Muslim employees. Discrimination in the

workplace increased from 18 percent in 2004 to more than 26 percent in 2006.

According to a report released in September called "The Struggle for Equality" by the American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the report said that out of the nearly 3,000 complaints received by CAIR during calendar year 2005, over one-quarter of these reports originated in the workplace. CAIR Legal Director Arsalan Iftikhar, the report's author, called the acts of bias the result of "the growth of Islamophobia."

SEE DISCRIMINATION \* PAGE 17



## Muslim Youth Enter Political Arena

By Sarah Hassane

A new generation of energized and forward young Muslims in America are pursuing career paths that do not fall in the

conventional or preferred science and engineering fields. In fact, a growing percentage of youth are considering careers in politics and social sciences.

Washington D.C., the nation's capital, has become the hotpot for young Muslims across America. The political hub and the home base for national offices of multifarious political, social,

SEE YOUTH POLITICS \* PAGE 15

## FEATURED SECTION

Where the Cross Meets the Crescent  
Richmond, Va. Council Together  
Islam and Christianity  
spirituality in the Southland  
This month's column is a letter to a pastor who is disappointed about Islam.

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From left to right: Subis Alcorn, Mayor Pro Tem Subhan Khas (Iran-Mexico)

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## Serving the Homeless with Dignity and Respect

By Sahar Kassamirah for IslamOnline.net and InFocus News Staff

The annual Muslim Humanitarian Day to feed the homeless is now in its sixth year, and has expanded to serve

all backgrounds in fourteen cities nationwide

The event, which originated in Los Angeles, has become a Ramadan tradition for Southern Muslims who are eager to earn rewards while in a state of fasting. This year, buses filled

all groups from Islamic centers swarmed to Skid Row on October 15 to serve over 1600 people in need.

"We usually provide them with a warm meal like a burger donated by a restaurant," said Mostafa Mahboob, media and public relations representative of Islamic Relief, one of the lead coordinators of the event along with the Intellect, Love, and Mercy (ILM) Foundation.

Beneficiaries received a gift package including hygiene and emergency kits, bath towels, clothing, blankets, ponchos and toys for children. The event also includes free critical medical services, such as health screening, HIV/AIDS screening, flu vaccination, educational materials and referral information, and other social and health services.

"Humanitarian Day is a day when we provide service to our fellow homeless in the form of dignity and respect," said Umar A. Hakeem of the Coalition to Preserve Human Dignity (CPHD).

"Ramadan is a time of increased compassion and caring for others," said Habbib Hussain, founder of the Rahima Foundation, the event's primary organizer in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area.

"I really like it because they made me feel really good. They upped my spirits," said a middle-aged, female beneficiary.

"This is new to me. I have never been in this situation before. I just lost everything and I'm now trying to pick myself back up," said another beneficiary.

SEE HUMANITARIAN DAY PAGE 6



## Congresswoman's Name on No Fly List

By Gillian Flaccus Associated Press

A California congresswoman said she was briefly denied access to a United Airlines flight last week because her name appeared on a "no fly list" set up after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Rep. Loretta Sanchez, a Democrat who has been a critic of the no-fly list, said her staff had booked her a one-way ticket from Boise, Idaho, to Cincinnati through Denver. But they were prevented from printing her boarding pass online and at an airport kiosk.

Sanchez said she was instructed to check in with a United employee, who told her she was on the terrorist watch list. The employee asked her for identification, Sanchez said.

"I handed over my congressional ID and he started laughing and said, 'I'm going to need an ID that has your birthday on it,'" Sanchez said in a phone interview with The Associated Press. The employee used Sanchez's birth date to determine she was not the same Loretta Sanchez on the list, and she was able to board her

Transportation Security Administration spokeswoman Jennifer Peppin said that for security reasons she couldn't confirm that the name was on the list. But she said that name mix-ups do occur. "Generally what happens is people have a name that is very similar to someone who is on the no-fly list. It's the airline's responsibility to do further checking," Peppin said.

Sanchez is favored to win a sixth term representing the 47th Congressional District. The district includes many of the 24,000 Arab Americans who live in Orange County and is home to the Islamic Society of Orange County, one of the state's largest Islamic centers.

Sanchez said that she has fought to get some of her constituents' names off the no-fly list and that doing so can take up to six months. "When they want to, TSA can make sure that you don't have that identification problem," she said. "Sometimes it's taken us months to get these people off the lists so they can travel in a normal way. I can't have to worry

## My Reflections on Humanitarian Day

Humanitarian Day is a day when we provide service to our fellow homeless in the form of dignity and respect."

"I really like it because they made me feel really good. They upped my spirits," said a middle-aged, female beneficiary.

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"Humanitarian Day is a day when we provide service to our fellow homeless in the form of dignity and respect."

## Muslim Appointed to Human Relations Commission

By Aisha Aziz

Riverside resident Omar Zaki recently became the first Muslim to be appointed to the Riverside Human Relations Commission (HRC). Zaki hopes that having a seat on one of the city's most prominent commissions will bring American Muslims closer to the mainstream and encourage the community to foster bonds.

"I believe we as Muslims have a duty to be ambassadors of bringing people together and developing cooperation, understanding and respect for all people, irrespective of race, ethnicity or religion," Zaki said. "The HRC is an excellent vehicle in achieving these important goals that help strengthen our communities and ultimately, our country."

Election to the commission is open to Riverside residents, but is a highly competitive process. One has to have the right experience, background and interest to be eligible for selection.

Zaki's case was somewhat different. He was directly appointed by Riverside Mayor Ron Loveridge, a result of the mayor's work with the Muslim community there.

Loveridge said, "I was looking for first rate people to appoint to the Human Relations

Commission. I met, shared platforms, and worked with Omar Zaki. He comes with outstanding



Riverside resident Omar Zaki is sworn in.

community credentials, excellent analytical skills, and a personal style that is effective in small (and large) groups. I value his perspective on Riverside and its governance approach. I value his ability to speak as a member of the Islamic community in Riverside. And most of all, Omar Zaki will help make the Human Relations Commission more attentive and more effective for all residents of Riverside."

Zaki is currently vice president of a high-tech company in Orange County. He previously served as Director of Government Relations for the Southern California based Council on American-Islamic Relations. His background has been in the area of business development and marketing, and he possesses a BS in marketing and management from the University of Redlands. He also studied law at the University of La Verne, College of Law. Zaki is married and has two girls, Nina

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**Southern California InFocus** is the largest American Muslim newspaper in California with a circulation of 75,000 copies and a distribution to over 350 Muslim businesses and 70 mosques throughout California. It is a monthly newspaper and is published on the first of every month.

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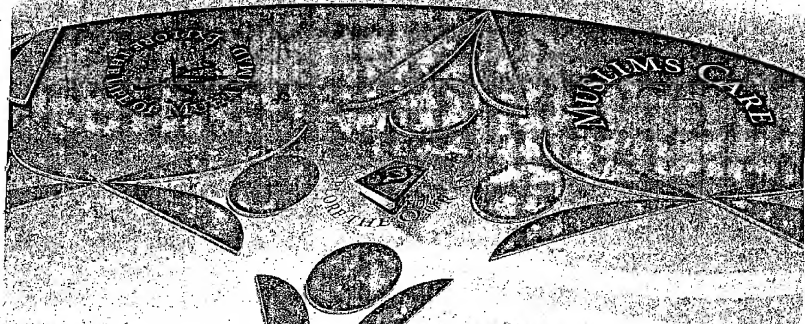
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IN THE NAME OF ALLAH (GOD), MOST GRACIOUS, MOST MERCIFUL.



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## Ten-year-old Goes to College

By Sama Wareh

On a Wednesday evening, when children are playing outside or indoors on their Nintendo 64, Shabana Syed is rushing to make it to a digital electronics and chip design class at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont. But, the class is not for her. It is for her 10-year-old son, Danyal Syed.

Syed, a sixth grade student at Sierra Vista Elementary school, is one grade ahead at his elementary school and several steps ahead of his peers.

Syed, along with classmate Jake McLees, was selected to audit the college class for his skills in programming and algebra. Bonnie Pulner, his fifth grade teacher, had arranged for a small group of her advanced students to do enrichment work with Harvey Mudd professor David Minsky Harris.

"They took to programming very quickly and went beyond the weekly projects to explore their own ideas," said Harris, who teaches the chip design class at the college. "I realized that they were capable of so much more than I could offer, and it was at this point that they were offered to take this class at Harvey Mudd."

123 college students applied for the class and only 14 students made it in. "They were the thirteenth and fourteenth," Pulner proudly told InFocus. "They are treated as equals and do the same amount of homework and participate equally, if not more."

It came as no surprise for Syed's parents. By the time he was three years old, he had already memorized a large deal of Latin words and their pronunciations, said his mother, Shabana.

Despite a high I.Q., Syed enjoys playing games and endures the burdens of peer pressure like any other kid. Syed's preferred hobbies include reading, playing chess, board games, and video games, but unlike other kids, he will hack into the video game instead of actually playing it.

"The biggest challenge that I think what I face at this age is trying to fit in

and actually have some social status," Syed told InFocus. But at his elementary school, he seems to have no trouble with that; for he just got elected Student Body President. "In elementary school, it's not a problem, because everyone knows about me and really respects me and I have a lot of friends. I don't know if that will change in junior high as the peer pressure increases," Syed mused.

Syed is also quite the philosopher and offers this advice to parents. "I think that your kids should just try to be really determined to reach their dreams and always try their best. Allah has given everyone the same brain. It's how you use it that matters."



10-year-old Danyal Syed attends a digital electronics and chip design class at Harvey Mudd College.

## Competition Tests Islamic Smarts

More than 40 participants ranging from ages 13 to 17 took part in a religious quiz program entitled "Know Your Deen" at the King Fahad Mosque in Culver City on October 21. Abdurrahman Lackgar, a 14-year-old student at Santa Monica College,

secured the first place prize of \$300. Second and third place winners were Sameer Ahmed and Saad Khan. The program was organized by Afti Akbar and focused on questions on Islam, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and Muslim history.



Top Prepping hold, Afti Akbar, Fatimah Patahi, Hanaa Yoseph, Meriam, Razuqi, Noor Sulaiman, Sarah Isaac, Sarah Yusuf, Umar Ahmed, Weida Sidiqi, Fatimah Muhammad, Unaymah Muhammad and Aishah Mayard.

Left: Unaymah Muhammad thanks her before giving her final answer to competition host and organizer Afti Akbar. Right: First place winner Abdurrahman Lackgar shows off his prize of \$300. (Photos by YK2006)

## HUMANITARIAN DAY

FROM PAGE 2

"And all this is Godsend. And I appreciate it."

Participating organizations included the Muslim American Society (MAS), Council

(CPHD) and the Rahima Foundation. It was organized this year in fourteen cities: Los Angeles, CA; Las Vegas, NV; Detroit, MI; Newark, NJ; Baltimore, MD; Baton Rouge, LA; Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Dallas, TX; Houston, TX; New Orleans,

## Ramadan Brings Different Faith Groups Together

By Zainab Khazi

A Catholic pastor, a Jewish Rabbi and a Muslim imam shared warm words, hugs and a meal in the first annual interfaith rift gathering organized by the Long Beach Islamic Center at the Marriott on October 5.

Father Joe Magana of St. Anthony's Catholic Church spoke about the importance of coming together as a community and teaching tolerance. He also apologized for the Pope's speech.

Quoting from Pope John Paul II, Magana spoke about the respect he has for Muslims and their devotion to their faith. "The religiosity of Muslims deserves respect. It is impossible not to admire, for example, their fidelity to prayer. The image of believers in Allah, who, almost without ceasing about time or place, fall to their



knees and immerse themselves in prayer remains a model for all those who invoke the true God," he said.

SEE INTERFAITH RIFT, PAGE 25

## Muslim Selected OC Bailiff of the Year

InFocus News Staff

On October 11, Deputy Anees Hakim was awarded the Bailiff of the Year Award for 2006 by the Orange County Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA). This award is presented annually to an Orange County Sheriff's Department bailiff who consistently demonstrates outstanding professionalism and civility in performing his or her tasks. The members of ABOTA, and all litigants and their attorneys, appreciate being treated with courtesy, dignity, and professionalism.



Deputy Anees Hakim

in Santa Ana Superior Court for the past five years.

Hakim is the first American Muslim to receive this prestigious award and honor in Orange County. His career in law enforcement started in 1988 when he joined the Orange County Sheriff's Department, which merged with the Sheriff's Department in July 2000. Hakim has been assigned to the Honorable Judge David A. Thompson's Courtroom.

## ISOC Celebrates 30 Years

By Radia Hussain

A Muslim minority, Zakat is the primary.

From first having prayers in a garage in Fullerton 30 years ago, to becoming the largest and oldest Orange County Islamic organization, the Islamic Society of Orange County (ISOC) has come a long way.

To celebrate 30 years of service to the community, about 300 people attended the ISOC fundraiser on October 15 in Buena Park.

The Garden Grove-based center consists of Masjid Al Rahmat and Orange Crescent School and provides other services such as



Attendees and guests

SEE ISOC 30 YEARS, PAGE 17

## Plight of the Palestinian Children

By InFocus News Staff

On October 7, KinderUSA issued the plight of Palestinian children at its fourth annual rift and fundraiser in La Mirada.

Dr. Maher Hadad, the recent recipient of the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, John Allen Bugge award, was the keynote speaker at the interfaith gathering.

With Palestinian unemployment at the highest levels ever, and an overwhelming surge by Israel, more than 60% of Palestinian children suffer from malnutrition and disease. One in every three children born in Gaza dies of lack of nutrition and medical supplies. Further complicating matters is the international effort to deprive the Palestinian people of much needed aid that they had been receiving.

SEE PALESTINIAN PLIGHT, PAGE 17

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"Why aren't our voices being heard?"

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"Why do they link Islam with Fascism?"

"How can I get off the no-fly list?"

"Why did we invade Iraq?"

"Why do we send missiles

and not to the Middle East?"

"How did they get away with..."

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## Third South African Muslim Deported from US in Past Month

By Roux Van Zyl and Tom Mapham  
Daily Dispatch and News Agencies

A storm is brewing after leading South African academic and Muslim, Professor Adam Habib, was deported from the US on October 31.

Habib, executive director of the Human Sciences Research Council's Democracy and Governance Research Programme, was questioned for more than seven hours at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York.

His visa was then revoked and he was escorted back to a plane by armed guards and deported.

Habib is the third South African Muslim to be deported from the US in the past month.

South African human rights activists, including Muslim groups, have reacted with outrage, calling on the US to justify their actions.

Habib told the Daily Dispatch that on his arrival in the US, officials pulled him

aside and asked whether he knew any terrorist or if he belonged to any terror organizations.

"They asked me if I was a terrorist and I said no. Then they asked if I had ever been in prison and I said no. I was politically detained by the apartheid government," he said.

Habib, who has not been given a reason for his deportation, said he felt his "personal rights" were severely infringed. "You can't just deny someone access to a country and not give them any reasons why. It's like you accuse someone, but you don't tell them what for," he said.

Habib's arrival on Saturday when he arrived in New York with an HSRC delegation scheduled to meet officials of a number of US institutions, including the

South African human rights activists are outraged at Professor Adam Habib's deportation

National Institute of Health, the Center for Disease Control, the World Bank, Columbia University and some donor agencies. "None of the blue, I have a 10-year multiple entry-visa issued three years ago. The last time I traveled to the US was in 2004 and I did not have any problems."

In 2002 and 2003 the Financial Mail described Habib as one of the 300 most influential black opinion makers in South Africa. Habib said he had visited the US more than 20 times previously for work and personal reasons without any problems.

Also on the same day, Muslim scholar Fadhil Rahman Azmi was detained by officials from US Customs and Border Protection when he arrived at San Francisco International Airport from London to lead prayers in Ramadan.

Azmi, who had made previous visits to the country as recently as April without

problems, was questioned for hours before being denied entry and sent on a plane out of the country on Saturday, the group said.

Azmi, a 60-year-old diabetic, told the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) that he was "put in jail" and treated "like I did a big crime" despite the fact that he was never informed why he was refused entry. He said he only ate bread during his time in detention and that he slept in a chair Friday night.

"The way visiting Islamic leaders are treated by American authorities can send either a positive or negative message to Muslims worldwide," CAIR spokesman Ibrahim Hooper said in a statement. "So far, the message in this case has been negative."

In September, another Islamic scholar from South Africa, Ismail Mullah, was denied entry into the country when he arrived at Dulles International Airport for a trip to visit Muslims in northern Virginia.

## Mobilized US Muslims Decisive Voting Block

By Suhair Kassamiah

IslamOnline.net

With over two million registered voters and growing political awareness, experts believe American Muslims could affect the outcome of the upcoming mid-term elections, especially in heavily Muslim-populated districts.

"There are several states in which, given the size of the Muslim population and closeness of the political race, that large Muslim voter turnout could make a difference," said Mubdi Bray, the Executive Director of the Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation (MAASF), told IslamOnline.net.

Some of these states are Virginia, New Jersey, Maryland, Texas, Florida,



Hassan Ayloush, Executive Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

Arizona, California, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, and Minnesota," he said.

Additionally, if you factor in voter apathy among many non-Muslim Americans, large Muslim voter turnout becomes even more significant," asserted Bray.

Hassan Ayloush, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) in Los Angeles, agrees.

"In certain portions of the country, where American Muslims are concentrated such as Dearborn, Michigan, the difference and change the tide of politics in their favor," he told NOL.

American Muslims,

estimated at between five and seven million, have already set up voter registration booths in mosques across the country to encourage fellow Muslim voters to sign up for the mid-term elections.

They have also established a website to enable online registrations. There are over two million registered Muslim voters in the United States.

All 435 House seats, 34 of 100 Senate seats and 36 governorships are up for grasp in the November elections.

A new poll by CAIR, the largest Muslim civil advocacy group in the US, shows the Muslim community has changed a great deal since supporting Republicans in 2000.

"The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the staunch support for Israel especially during the recent Lebanon war, the suspension of civil rights and the war on terrorism, increasingly perceived by Muslims as the war on Islam, and persistent Islamophobia

are critical issues that haven't been resolved to Muslim Americans' satisfaction," said Ayloush.

"These issues will help rally Muslim Americans to become more politically active," he asserted.

The CAIR poll was based on interviewing 1,000 registered Muslim voters. Eighty nine percent of those surveyed said they vote regularly.

Bray also believes that American Muslims are highly motivated to be more politically active. "They recognize that if they don't want to be second class citizens in their own country then they have no option but to be politically active."

"The latest poll commissioned by CAIR is a good example and goes to show that Muslim Americans and Muslim political parties are issue-oriented instead of being

SEE MOBILIZED MUSLIMS PAGE 10

## 40% Believe Israel Lobby Key Factor in Iraq



CNI

A new poll commissioned by the Council for the National Interest Foundation shows that a significant number of Americans are wary of the power of the Israel lobby, and believe it is behind the invasion of Iraq and the current belligerent tone of the White House and Congress toward Iran.

The poll, which was carried out by Zogby International, reveals that 39% of the American public "agree" or "somewhat agree" that "the work of the Israel lobby on Congress and the Bush Administration has been a key factor for going to war in Iraq and now confronting Iran." However, a similar number, 40%, "strongly disagreed" or "somewhat disagreed" with this position. Some 20% of the public, or more than one in five, were not sure.

The poll suggests that the espionage charges against two employees of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the publicity given to a new study of the power of the Israel lobby by two mainstream academic professors has had an effect on people's awareness of the lobby.

The academic study, done by Professor John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago and Professor Stephen Walt of

Harvard University, was published in the London Review of Books in March 2006 and was the subject of a recent debate at Peter Cooper Union that included Professor Mearsheimer, Prof. Rashid Khalidi (Columbia University), and Prof. Tony Judt (New York University) and three influential pro-Zionists, Martin Indyk, Dennis Ross, and Shimon Bin-Ami.

The poll's details show that 46% of Democrats tended to believe that the lobby was influential in the decision to go to war in Iraq while 45% of Republicans tended to believe it was not.

Along religious lines, while Protestants tended to be evenly divided on the role of the Israel Lobby in the Iraq invasion, 45% of Catholics tended to see the lobby's hand in the invasion, while 77% of Jewish Americans over-whelming disagreed with the premise. Among ethnic groups, Hispanics (63%) believed that the lobby's role was influential.

Among age groups, 60% of those between the ages of 18 and 29 agreed that the Israel lobby had a hand in forming the current pro-war policy. As no religious, political or ethnic group was progressive (45%) or liberal (52%) also agreed in the role of the lobby, while "moderates" (42%) and "very conservative" (44%) people disagreed with the idea, as did a significant percentage of college graduates (44%).

Eugene Bird, president of CNI Foundation, commented about the poll. "It demonstrates the need for widening the circulation of information about the role of the Neocons and the pro-Israel lobby in the circles of power during the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003."

Some 1,045 people participated in the poll, which was conducted in every part of the country.

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# Soros-backed American Jews to Launch new Mideast Initiative

By Foreign News Desk

The Israeli attacks on Lebanon that were quietly supported by the United States sparked hot debates on Israeli-American relations inside the American Jewish community.

The *Financial Times* claimed that some Jewish circles in the United States are trying to organize a new Jewish lobby that will spend efforts to maintain peace between Israel and Palestine. The paper also noted that the new initiative to be called "The New Israel Project" will be backed by the renowned Jewish tycoon George Soros, also known for his opposition to the U.S. President George Bush.

The paper reported on October 24 that within the Jewish community in the United States, a new initiative was launched with the support of Soros and the Project, the lobby for a viable peace accord. According to the report, the new group, which will be designed as an alternative to other U.S. Jewish lobbies, will be lobbying for an initiative that will propose a two-state solution, and involve the United States. The *Financial Times*, which asserted that the new structure might rival the most influential U.S. lobbying institution, the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), also noted that "it is at the leaders of this initiative, however, denied the allegations of this sort. An organizer of the proposed 'New Israel Project,' Jeremy Ben-Ami, said: 'The Lebanon conflict provided a sense of urgency to discussions. The discussions

and voted for Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush, but switched to support the Democrats in 2004 to protest what they saw as Bush's anti-Muslim policies. 'The lesson of the 2000 election is a simple one,' said Ben-Ami. 'It is a long-term and honest effort to bring about a two-state solution and bring peace to the region.'

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represent a new effort to promote the perspective in the Jewish community that Israel's security depends on ending the Palestinian conflict peacefully. We deeply care for Israel. The Lebanon conflict shows the dangers facing Israel and its need for peace as quickly as possible.'

David Elliott from the U.S. Jewish Congress, Morton Halperin, former State Department foreign policy analyst and executive of the Open Society Institute chaired by Soros, and Debra DeLee, Chair of the Peace Now Organization, were listed by the paper among the supporters of the new project. It is expected that George Soros, who has been criticizing Israeli tactics against Hezbollah while seeking a political settlement with the Palestinians, will press support for the project.

The discussions over American-Israeli relations were resumed by John Mearns, chair of the University of Chicago and Stephen Walt from Harvard University, who stated in their article on the influence of the Israeli lobby published in March that Israel blockaded the United States by all means, and that no U.S. administration could ever take a step not favored by Israel.

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crimes, substance abuse, mental and identity issues.

In our counseling session, Dr. Young was told by a female veteran, "The only fabric I am comfortable with is Kevlar."

Dr. Young said that female veterans are not able to adapt to motherhood because they are afraid of being too attached. Sixty percent of veterans with brain injuries end up being divorced by their spouse.

According to Congressman Bob Filner, senior democrat on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the U.S. is spending one billion dollars every two and half days to fight Iraq. "And they can't spend at least one billion on veterans returning home," he asked.

"I would recommend we become proactive and stop this war," said Dr. Ballos.

PSR is a non-profit advocacy organization with more than 30 offices nationwide.

Survivors include: Al-

## Rising Star Obama Weighs White House Run

Associated Press

Sen. Barack Obama acknowledged Sunday he was considering a run for president in 2008, backing off previous statements that he would not do so.

The Illinois Democrat said he could no longer stand by the statements he made after his 2004 election and earlier this year that he would serve a full six-year term in Congress. He said he would not make a decision until after the Nov. 7 elections.

"That was how I was thinking at that time," said Obama, when asked on NBC's "Meet the Press" about his previous statements. Given the "realization that I've been getting over the last several months, I have thought about the possibility" although not with the seriousness or depth required, he said. "My main focus right now is in the '06. After November 7, I'll sit down, I'll sit down and consider my options. Some point I change my mind. I will make a public announcement and everybody will be able to go



He was largely unknown outside Illinois when he burst onto the national scene with a widely acclaimed address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention.

In recent weeks, his political stock has been rising as a potentially viable centrist candidate for president in 2008, after former Virginia Gov. Mark Warner announced earlier this month that he was bowing out of the race.

## US Muslim Charity Aid Worker Killed in Iraq

Associated Press

A key staffer for a Muslim humanitarian organization based in suburban Detroit was slain in his native Iraq, the group said Monday.

Abdul-Sattar Abdul-Rahman, 43, was shot and killed October 27, the group said.

run by one of the sectarian militias in Baghdad.

Southfield-based LIFE for Relief and Development provided a statement.

After receiving such threats, Abdul-Sattar Al-Masbudi was killed at a security checkpoint on October 7.

Southfield office was hit on Sept. 18, seizing computer servers, donor records and other financial documents. They also searched the homes of the charity's chief executive, an ex-employee and two board members.

No charges have been brought in the case. Life has sought to restore the Detroit area's Muslim community to the legal to donate money to the organization, which was founded in 1992 by Iraqi immigrants.

Masbudi's pregnant wife, four children and three brothers. He was buried October 29.

"Our staff members in Iraq are realizing their lives everyday for the badly needed humanitarian work that the country desperately needs," said Khalil Jassim, the charity's chief executive. "In the end, Abdul-Sattar paid the ultimate price. He will be greatly missed."

FBI agents assigned to a terrorism task force searched Life's Southfield office on Sept. 18, seizing computer servers, donor records and other financial documents. They also searched the homes of the charity's chief executive, an ex-employee and two board members.

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## MOBILIZED MUSLIMS

FROM PAGE 9

"party-oriented," Ayloush said. The CAIR poll showed that 45 percent of respondents were Democratic and 17 percent Republican, while 36 percent said they were independent.

Dr. David Ross presented the study of the conference organized by the Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR).

Other speakers also emphasized the first situation. "For the Iraqi people, it's a disaster, and medical care is worse," said neurosurgeon Dr. Gary Ballos.

"Any American who goes to Iraq for just fifteen minutes, will know and want US troops to come back home," Dr. Debra Waafi told JInFocus. After completing two trips to Iraq since the 2003 "Shock and Awe" campaign led by the Bush administration, Dr. Waafi had put her medical career on hold and founded Liberethia, an online to educate Americans about the war.

According to Waafi, Iraq's

healthcare system, once known as "the heart of the Arab world," was devastated in the 1990 Gulf War, and the current invasion has only aggravated the situation. "Since 2003, hospital conditions have gone from bad to worse, with supplies more scarce than before the invasion," she said.

On the American side, 2,700 soldiers have been killed and 20,000 injured since the start of the US-led occupation.

The clinical trauma affecting soldiers is also a cause of alarm. "Veterans feel like animals because of the violence they saw," said clinical psychologist Dr. Helena Young. Other fatal injuries that veterans face include post-traumatic stress disorder, "hyper-vigilance," a term that describes the mental state of modern behavior patterns that include repressing in combat mode even in civilian life through emotional overload, spiritual

trauma, substance abuse, mental and identity issues.

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# Musharraf Defends Pakistan School Attacks

News Agencies

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf defended the October 30 army action against an Islamic school which killed 50 alleged terrorists, as Islamists across the country protested what their top leader called "the unpardonable crime."

Musharraf told an international gathering in Islamabad that anyone saying those killed in the airstrike on the madrassa were innocent "is telling lies."

"They were all militants. They were doing military training there. We were working on them for last six, seven days and we know who they are and what they were doing," the president said.

Thousands of Pakistanis protested the missile strike in several rallies on October 31. Speakers declared it was a U.S.



Leaders and activists of a political party protest in Hyderabad against the air strike on a seminary in Bajar.

attack, with Pakistan participating in the operation in order to hide the Americans' if those

roles. US television channel ABC News reported that a US Predator drone had fired the missiles that destroyed the Chhargana madrassa in Bajar, a tribal region, which borders Afghanistan's

The UNCTD Assembly met aside routine work on Tuesday to debate the attack on madrassa. Some speakers alleged that the US carried out the attack to weaken the peace deal with the Bajar tribes.

"They rejected Musharraf's claim that the school was being used for terrorist training. No arms were recovered from the destroyed madrassa, they pointed out. Even inside were identified as terrorists,

as claimed by Musharraf, they should have been taken into custody and prosecuted in courts of law, provincial lawmakers said.

The White House said that it supported Pakistan's deadly air raid on an Islamic school and praised President Pervez Musharraf for showing "determination" to fight terrorism.

"There was a strike and it was intended to go after Al Qaeda. And the Pakistani government did so on the basis of intelligence that it had gathered and we support them in this," said spokesman Tony Snow.

Human Rights Watch and Pakistani politicians meanwhile called for an independent probe into claims that the 80 people who died in Monday's strike in Bajar tribal agency were all students and teachers.

## Eid in Europe

Happy 'Eid for Spanish Muslims

By A-Amin Andalus, IOL Correspondent

'Eid Al-Fitr was a bit different this year for Spanish Muslims after two years of police arrests, vile media campaigns and suspicious looks from fellow Spaniards.

The government seems ready to turn a new leaf in its relations with the Muslim minority, deciding to allocate cash for the main representative Muslim body on par with Christians and Jews.

The decision, put on ice since 1992, is expected to enter into force in 2008, according to ABC newspaper.

Though it is not clear how much the government would set aside for Muslims, the move is a significant goodwill gesture towards such stereotyped Islam, the second religion in Spain after Catholic Christianity.

Spain has a Muslim minority of about 800,000 people out of a total population

of 40 million.

Ukhle in the past few years, Spanish media objectively covered Muslim activities during the last days of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Reporters and editors left their desks and interviewed Muslims in areas with dense Muslim population to convey unwelcome facts about Muslims to fellow countrymen.

Some TV channels have also aired short documentaries on preparation for 'Eid Al-Fitr, one of the two most important Islamic celebrations, together with 'Eid Al-Adha.

French Dwarfs Arabic in Eid Greetings.

By Hadi Yahmid, IOL Correspondent

"Bonnie Fete" (Happy 'Eid) has become the favorite 'Eid greeting for the second and third generations of French Muslims, eclipsing traditional Arabic ones used by their parents and grandparents.

It is obvious from the outpour of the words 'I love' received that French greetings like 'bonnie fete' have replaced



Cordoba Mosque in Spain

traditional ones like the Algerian 'Sab 'Eidek' (May God-bless your 'Eid). Mured Alami, a Muslim activist, told IslamOnline.net on Monday, October 23, the last day of 'Eid Al-Fitr in France.

Though the Arabic word 'Eid' has entered the French lexicon and is used by politicians to wish Muslims a happy 'Eid, 'bonnie fete' has become the favorite among the younger generations.

There are approximately 800,000 French

of Moroccan background and 600,000 of Tunisian origin. The rest of the sizable Muslim minority hails from Turkey, Pakistan, India and South East Asia.

'Eid Comforts Italian Muslims

By Hadi Yahmid  
IslamOnline.net

The three-day 'Eid Al-Fitr brought a long last smile to the faces of many Italian Muslims who have had a very hard time with rising Islamophobia in the southern European country.

"We are resolved to leave beyond continuing media onslaughts against Islam and enjoy the 'Eid," Ali Abu Othman, the director of the Islamic Center in Milan, north of Rome, told IslamOnline.net.

"All Muslims in Italy should use 'Eid to wash away their problems." Italy has a Muslim population of some 1.2 million, including 20,000 converts, according to

Terrorism, violence, Islam and Muslims

have been making headlines recently in Italy.

"La Stampa" newspaper ran a story on Friday, October 20, on the new controversial movie "Propaganda" by Gianfranco Fini which associates Islam with violence.

Publishing a report on the arrest of

Pakistanis; currency smuggling, the local

Spolin Milano used a photo of a praying

Muslim to run with the story.

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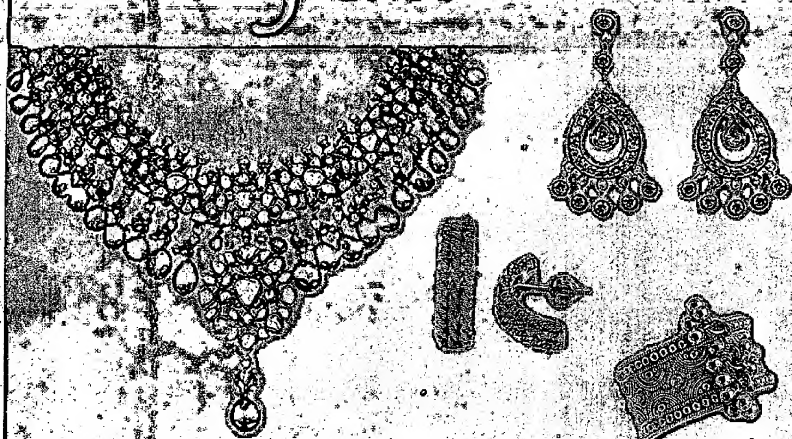
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## Dubai Tours Offer Positive View of Islam

By Siraj Wahab  
Associated Press

With tensions high between the Western and Islamic worlds, Dubai's leaders are trying to help with an unusual new form of tourism in this Gulf Arab boomtown best known for shopping and entertainment. A Dubai leader, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, is handing out tours for Western visitors to his sprawling Islamic-themed island about Islam, especially that the religion condones violence. The Islamic goal is defusing strains between Muslims and Christians that rose after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States and the war in Iraq.

"The hope is that tourists can spread understanding of Muslims in their home countries," he said.

"They are our neighbors," said Abdullah bin Eisa Al Serkal, a 40-year-old real estate salesman who moonlights as director of the Sheikh Mohammed Center for Cultural Understanding.

The tours of Dubai's mosques have grown over a decade from irregular gatherings of a dozen people in a few times weekly tours of a handful of mosques.

Now, the government-backed center hopes to expand inside the United Arab Emirates and beyond with an eye to its more than a million Westerners, mostly Europeans, who visit every year. It has budgeted \$2.7 million for a multimedia center devoted to Islamic and Arab culture at the mosque. The center is also expanding tours to other mosques in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the capital of the Emirates. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, ruler of Dubai, said the tours are a "new initiative" to help Westerners understand Islam.



Jumeira Mosque, Dubai

perched atop a hill. Under the towering dome of the Jumeira Mosque, Al Serkal described the beliefs of his Islamic Muslim with references to Christian themes in Judaism and Christianity.

He explained the faith behind Ramadan fasting in German and said they are like the Christians' fast. He demonstrated Muslim prayer techniques, including kneeling, sitting and then prostrating his forehead to the carpet.

Then he revealed the content of his prayers. Standing he recited the "Basmala" in Arabic, the name of anything related to work. Kneeling he recited a prayer for the prophet, Muhammad.

Prostrating he recited a prayer for the prophet, Muhammad. He said the difference between Sunni and Shiite sects and between Christianity and Islam is well in Islam's history.

He said the difference between Sunni and Shiite sects and between Christianity and Islam is well in Islam's history. He said the difference between Sunni and Shiite sects and between Christianity and Islam is well in Islam's history.

commented. "This message is all peace and happiness. As an English person I see the big side of it. How can you equate one with the other?" Smith asked.

Al-Serkal said Muslim leaders suffer from extremist "psychos and crazy people." It isn't just tourists who seek answers about Islam in Dubai. The Jumeira Mosque frequently hosted 150 U.S. Navy sailors and an American businessman's group.

The center has managed to turn the Ramadan fast-breaking dinner into a "unique event for Western diplomats and dignitaries." Eventually, the center wants to open branches in Europe and North America. Al-Serkal stressed that he would only improve the West's view of Islam. He said converts.

Al-Serkal's message did make headway. Belgian Lord De Bussche, 43, and his Slovak wife Zdenka Ochodnicka, 33, said they now questioned their "very negative opinion of Muslims in Belgium."

Ochodnicka said she was born in a family where she had seen women veiled and men in traditional Arab robes. After a few days, she realized Dubai was safe and that her negative impression stemmed from television news.

"When everything is Muslim, it's not like in Belgium," Ochodnicka said. "Maybe it shouldn't be that way. That's why I'm glad I came here. Now I'm going to tell my friends."

For more information on the Sheikh Mohammed Center visit [www.shmcc.ae](http://www.shmcc.ae).

## Somalian Leader Urges Ethiopia Revolt

By Mohamed Olad Hassan  
Associated Press



Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys

A senior leader of the Islamic group who control much of southern Somalia urged people in neighboring Ethiopia on October 23 to revolt against their government.

Calling it an oppressive regime led by an unpopular minority group, Tensions between Ethiopia and the Islamic group have been mounting in recent months with reports that Ethiopian troops have entered Somalia to support the country's weak government.

So far they have avoided direct clashes, but the rhetoric on both sides has been fiery, raising fears of a conflict that could engulf the Horn of Africa region.

"I dare you to come and fight us. Do not just run," Islamic leader Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys said in a challenge to Ethiopia. He was addressing thousands of Somalis gathered in the capital, Mogadishu, to celebrate the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

"We urge Ethiopian people, who are not part of this aggression against Somalia, to revolt against and remove the oppressive regime led by (Ethiopia Prime Minister) Meles Zenawi," a senior Islamic leader, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, said at the same event.

Somalia's Islamic leaders made similar calls in other towns, threatening to drive Ethiopia from Baidoa, the only town the Somali government controls, about 150 miles from Mogadishu.

Ethiopia, whose population of 77 million is nearly half

Muslim, is fearful of a fundamentalist state developing next door. It has denied that its forces are in Somalia, but Meles acknowledged October 26 that his troops were training

Somali government forces. Critics, which fought a border war with Ethiopia that ended in 2000, is accused of providing military support to the Islamic group.

Aweys' comments came as Somali government troops withdrew from Bur Haba, a strategic highland town they had taken over with the help of Ethiopian troops two days earlier, a resident said.

Islamic officials said they re-entered the town Monday morning after the government forces had pulled out. Militia leader Mohammed Ibrahim Husein said an Islamic court would be established there and the town would become one of his movement's biggest bases.

One government soldier who remained was shot and killed by the militia, resident Ahmed Osman told The Associated Press by telephone. Officials were not immediately available to comment.

Somalia has not had an effective national government since 1991, when warlords overthrew dictator Mohamed Siad Barre and turned on one another, throwing the country into anarchy. The current government was formed in 2004 with U.N. help in hopes of restoring order.

## Bin Mahfouz Libel Rulings Boost Saudi Confidence

By Siraj Wahab  
Arab News

A Saudi banker's name has been cleared after a book accused him of funding Al-Qaeda.

Banker Khalid Bin Mahfouz received an unconditional apology and substantial damages from Jean-Charles Brisard and Guillaume Desqueux who alleged in their 2002 book, "The Forbidden Truth," that he had funded Al-Qaeda. The book is now set to be withdrawn from

into worldwide.

"Ever since Sept. 11, 2001, Saudi and Muslim businessmen have been under intense attack from upstart Western writers who, passing themselves off as international relations financing experts, have been dishing out all kinds of nonsense



The 2002 bestseller will be taken off the shelves for libeling a Saudi banker.

into worldwide. The 2002 bestseller will be taken off the shelves for libeling a Saudi banker.

in the name of journalism. This verdict will serve as a kind of antidote to such mendacity. We can fight back and we should."

Judges in the UK and Switzerland found that in the book Brisard and Desqueux had defamed Khalid Bin Mahfouz

and his son, Abdul Rahman Bin Mahfouz. Upon publication, the book received huge publicity and gave refuge to Brisard's additional allegations in a 2002 report, "Terrorism Financing," which he submitted to the United Nations.

In a written apology to the Bin Mahfouz family, the authors said, "As a result of what we now know, we accept and acknowledge that all of those allegations about you and your families, businesses and charities are entirely and

manifestly false."

This is perhaps the first time that a non-fiction book has been taken off shelves because of falsehoods.

Khalid Bin Mahfouz was formerly the chairman of the National Commercial Bank (NCB), which his father, Salem Bin Mahfouz, founded in the 1960s. Salem Bin Mahfouz was a well-known entrepreneur who rose from being a small-time money changer to becoming the founder of the leading Saudi bank.

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YOUTH POLITICS  
FROM PAGE 1

and humane organizations is attracting impressive and ambitious youth that genuinely aspire to make a difference.

Azzam Ghory, community outreach coordinator for the D.C. office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said that she has definitely seen more involvement from Muslim youth in the past five years. "My generation of over 50 years of age is just now seeing the value of voting and of participating in our communities, but the youth today are well aware of their responsibility and are working hard already."

Shafiqah Ghori, 25, the D.C. program director for MPAC, the Muslim Public Affairs Council, said that she enjoys the "political atmosphere" of the city. "There are excellent opportunities for Muslims to get involved in government. It is great that our community is producing more and more young people who want to make a difference on the governmental level."

Influenced by 9/11, Ghori chose to attend law school. "After 9/11, I realized the need for Muslim lawyers and activists, and I understood that a legal education would equip me with the skills to make a difference for the Muslim community. We as Muslim Americans are not aware of our rights. By studying law, I feel like I can contribute more towards establishing an American Muslim identity."

Muslim young Muslims like Ghori are "realizing that they have a responsibility to fulfill."

Azzam Al-Sarraf, 24, a resident of Los Angeles, grew up immersed in politics and is an immigrant activist. He came to D.C. to pursue his

undergraduate degree at George Washington University and wishes to run for office one day. He works for Representative Bill Pascrell from New Jersey whose constituent pool is made up of the second largest Muslim community in America. Akhter had had the opportunity to work on many community concerns, such as immigration and holiday accommodations.

Al-Sarraf's experiences alone delineate the need for more Muslim involvement in political and social issues. He recounts that his meetings on the Hill were trying because a trust had to be built. "They didn't have personal contact with Muslims so they had no idea who Muslims were."

Fortunately, Muslims who arrive in D.C. today meet with their counterparts from all over America. Now, Friday afternoon prayers are held on the Hill and Muslims can easily connect with other Muslims through the Muslim Student Network (MSN) or through the local university Muslim Student Association.

The presence of more young Muslims in offices has also proven to be beneficial in terms of visibility and influence.

Arabi Siddiqui, 33, is Counsel to House Democratic Leader, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi for the Ways and Means Committee, one of the most powerful committees on the Hill. Siddiqui served as Pelosi's point person and helps form democratic positions on tax and trade issues as well as health care and social security. She shared that her work is far a greater good and that there are moments when she knows that she is influencing this shaping something.

Another notable young Muslim is Akhter Akhter, Akhter, 25, has

been working on Capitol Hill for three years and wishes to run for office one day. He works for Representative Bill Pascrell from New Jersey whose constituent pool is made up of the second largest Muslim community in America. Akhter had had the opportunity to work on many community concerns, such as immigration and holiday accommodations.



Dana Durkin is the current field representative of Congresswoman

Akhter is also vice-president of the Congressional Muslim Student Association, a congressionally recognized group whose mission is to educate Capitol Hill on Islam. The one-year old association has held a screening of Legacy of a Prophet after the cartoon controversy earlier this year and hosted an event with a professor from the Navy War College on the misuse of words like "jihad."

The Association has garnered positive reception from non-Muslims and has attracted attention from the New York Times, the Boston Globe, and the AP.

The MSN is also a growing vehicle for young Muslims to tap into D.C. while examining their identity and faith and focusing on contributing to American politics.

Ayden Kalyoncu, 60, the Executive Director of the Muslim Public Service Network (MPSN) in D.C. explained that MSN is a summer internship program designed to encourage and support Muslim college students interested in policy-oriented internships in Washington D.C. MPSN is the successor organization created in 2005, which supports American Muslims who want to study and work in the public service and policy arena.

"We definitely need more Muslims involved in the political process, but what we also need are well educated Muslims who understand US policy and who are networked with policy makers and legislators," Kalyoncu pointed out.

Young Muslims are also coming to D.C. through training and leadership programs. KARAMAH, a US based charitable and educational organization of Muslim women lawyers that focuses on the domestic and global issues of human rights for Muslims, has been providing a three-week leadership program for Muslim women for the past four years.

A lot of the participants in this program were not necessarily interested in politics, but more interested in social and human rights. Misraet Yufard, 24, applied for the program because she wanted something that would increase her awareness about current issues as well as simultaneously learn this Muslim history.

Both MSN and KARAMAH stress the importance of leading a life in the political and social field that is conducive with Islam. While opportunities are slowly surfacing for upcoming Muslim generations, contemporary challenges are still at bay.

The Muslim community at large lacks understanding in encouraging youth to consider a career in political or social work.

"The community can definitely help by providing more support to students. The only way Muslims can truly assimilate into the fabric of America is by creating an identity that is integrated into all parts of American society. We need Muslim journalists, Muslim news anchors, Muslim artists, Muslim architects etc.," said Ghori.

More often than not, parents tend to be wary of a career in the political and social field. Many mentioned that their parents are supportive, but that they really don't understand the scope of the work that they do and would have preferred if they had chosen another career route.

While finding work in the political and social field is not easy, Al-Sarraf assured that "if you point the pavilion long and hard you will find something."

As America observes the five-year anniversary of 9/11, many say that Muslims need to evaluate the advances made in improving relations with the surrounding American public and with governmental populations.

"It is imperative that Muslims be engaged in a viable and effective manner otherwise they will have no right to complain for the loss of their rights and liberties," said the Dean of Sagnaw Valley her awareness about current issues as well as simultaneously learn this Muslim history.

SEE YOUTH POLITICS PAGE 17

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## FEATURE

## TV IN THE HOME

FROM PAGE 1

Muslim woman in Covina, does not agree that television is all that bad. "I watch Discovery and History channels as well as the Arabic channels," Ascha said. "My younger brothers only watch children programming." Ascha added that her parents set limits to what she and her three brothers can or can't watch. With Arabic satellite hooked up, they find that watching television keeps them in touch



with their cultural heritage. Asche argued that with the rating system in place, people do get advance warning about what they are about to watch.

Sheikh Yassin Farag, Imam of Mission Viejo mosque, characterized television as being a tool that can be used for either good or evil. "It's like a knife," he said. "You can use it for cooking or you can use it to kill people. What we do with it determines whether it's *halal* (lawful) or

**haram** (unlawful)." Fazag pointed out that television has some positive programming as well as negative ones. What we decide to watch determines how we intend to use television.

However, Imam Muhammad Al-Shareef, founder of Khutbah.com, argues that "parents cannot always" monitor their children's television habits. "55% of parents with children aged 8 and over don't monitor the viewing material," he said. "Besides, what happens if the parent dies on the way to work one day, and the children inherit the TV?" Al-Shareef also recalled the verse in the Qur'an that says, "Tell the believing

men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts). That is purer for them" (Qur'an 24:30). He asks, "How do we reconcile these verses with the television that assaults our eyes with haram almost every second that it is on?"

Experts may be more in agreement with Al-Shareef than with proponents of restrictive viewing. Jon P. Barna, psychiatrist and child expert, said that research has shown that "children who consistently spend more than four hours per day watching TV are more likely to be overweight." Moreover, he indicated that kids who view violent events, such as a kidnapping or murder, are also more likely to believe that the world is scary and that something bad will happen to them.

Barnes added that research also indicates that TV consistently reinforces gender-role

Sarah Asch and her siblings catch some TV time after school. Sarah says that her family practices controlled TV viewing.

and racial stereotypes. "Experts agree that it's so important for parents to monitor the content of TV programming and set viewing limits to ensure that children do not spend time watching TV that should be spent on other activities, such as playing with friends, exercising, and reading," he said.

Nour Maftar, a 29-year-old business proprietor and wife Yasmin

Bhoj, a 29-year-old engineer, are parents of one child who exemplify the veracity of the research. Both said that they have a very productive lifestyle without television. "There is more time to read, worship, and develop other skills, whether it be physical, through sports, intellectual or craft-based," said Matter. "I was shocked by how much I missed out on life when I was addicted to television," Bhoj added. However,

that habit was interrupted a few months ago when World Cup came into the scene. Being soccer fans, the Mattare decided to get a television set. Straying from their no-television vows was not without cost. "All of a sudden, we went back to being couch potatoes. We started watching regular television when the games were not on," Bhuj said. "Once we realized that, we got rid of the television set as soon as World Cup was over."

commercially often ignore the consequences of drinking alcohol, doing drugs, smoking cigarettes, and having premarital sex.



... Yeh'va's videos available online. ...

Also, more underage children are being exposed to alcohol ads, and although cigarette ads are banned on television

SEE TV IN YOUR HOME: PAGE 17







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# NAIM SHAH: Beacon of Social Change

By Angie El Sherif

*Naim Shah, Jr. could not be doing more for the Muslim community here in Southern California. His extensive list of roles include Executive Director of ILM Foundation, managing partner of Shah and Associates, CPA Firm, Assistant Imam and Chairman of the Board of Masjid Ibaadillah, Program Director of Coalition to Preserve Human Dignity, board member of UMMA Community Clinic, former Treasurer of Islamic Shura Council of Southern California, Co-National Coordinating Director of Humanitarian Day of the Homeless, Consultant for the Rital Learning Center School Project and volunteer mentor for Dorsey High School Football Team.*

*37-year-old Shah was born and raised in Los Angeles. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Fresno State University and started working for the corporate world before devoting himself to Islam. Recently, InFocus had the privilege of talking to him about his inspiring journey.*

**InFocus:** What are your day-to-day responsibilities?

**Naim Shah:** First and foremost, my job is being a husband and father of four beautiful children. I oversee the operations of the ILM Foundation. I am a managing partner of my CPA firm that provides tax and audit services. Other work includes establishing and maintaining relationships with the Muslim community in Southern California, which has supported the foundation over the past eight years. I am also invited to speak about Islam and the ILM Foundation.

**IF:** Describe your life growing up.

**NS:** I was blessed with a very strong family that instilled in me the love for Islam and hard work. My father had such a strong presence in our home and the neighborhood that I had no desire to join gangs or commit any crimes. All my brothers and I played sports and all earned full football scholarships to college.

**IF:** What was it that made you leave the Nation of Islam and come to mainstream Islam?

**NS:** In 1975, the Nation of Islam under the leadership of Imam W.D. Muhammad made the transition into mainstream Islam. My parents also made that transition and have been Muslim ever since. My mom's aunt made her pilgrimage to Hajj three years ago.

**IF:** In what way have your roots been cultivated by the Nation of Islam?

**NS:** The original Nation of Islam, as an organization, was second to none in removing many of the social ills that

plagued the African American community from the 1930s through the 1970s. What impressed me most about the Nation of Islam were the members. They were so sincere, very hard working and extremely courageous. My parents, Imam Saadiq Saifur, Al-Hajj Malik Shabazz and Muhammad Ali are products of the Nation of Islam. It was the people of this great movement who paved the way for living Islam in America in the twenty first century. And it was those same members Allah blessed to evolve into mainstream Islam, so I am grateful for those roots.

**IF:** What made you leave the corporate world?

**NS:** I wanted to devote all my time toward developing my character and the Muslim community. So I prayed and left with the experience I gained and hoped that the work the ILM was doing in the community could grow to sustain me and my family.

**IF:** What is the ILM Foundation?

**NS:** The ILM Foundation really stands for Knowledge Foundation, but the acronym stands for Intellect, Love, and Mercy. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that focuses on establishing programs that can serve those in need, which implies low income or a certain location in Los Angeles. The programs provide immediate services such as food, education, crime management and mentoring. In addition

*'Islam began addressing the social needs of people; therefore, our goal was to use the same model to address the social needs in our neighborhood. We had to do something in the face of more youth going to jail than college and more likely to be killed on the streets of Los Angeles than in Iraq.'*

to that, we strategically try to address the need for peace, justice, unity and youth leadership.

**IF:** What inspired such an organization?

**NS:** The ILM Foundation was inspired by Imam Saadiq Saifur. He is the founder of the ILM Foundation along with my father and Hanafi Shakur. Our inspiration

came from Qur'an and life examples of Prophet Muhammad. Islam began addressing the social needs of people; therefore, our goal was to use the same



From left to right, Ahmad Hattab, Abdul Wahab, Naim Shah, Imam Saadiq Saifur (sitting down)

model to address the social needs in our neighborhood. We had to do something in the face of more youth going to jail than college and more likely to be killed on the streets of Los Angeles than in Iraq.

**IF:** ILM Foundation's mission is to "Teach Life Skills to Replace Social Ills." What do you mean by "social ill's"?

**NS:** A social ill is simply a barrier to faith. Social ills are things Islam encourages humanity to guard against and not participate in. Of the multitude of social ills, we focus on those affecting the youth and homeless. This list includes hunger, lack of shelter, job/leadership training, human dignity, mentoring and education.

Also, I would like to introduce ILM Foundation's new chapter in Las Vegas, whose executive director is Imam Paton. The Las Vegas chapter programs are well established and they are doing an excellent job.

**IF:** What types of life skills have you successfully taught?

**NS:** The type of life skills we teach at the ILM Foundation is youth leadership training. We recruit youth from the community to run and oversee many of our large events. At ILM Foundation, we are willing to compromise an excellent mentoring event to train our youth. For the past five years, Hasan and Rahim Muhammad coordinated our annual football camps and next year are speaking of doubling the number of participants. This year, Umar Hakim and Anif Kazi coordinated Humanitarian Day for the Homeless. Imam Saadiq has also established a tradition of educating Muslims here and abroad about living Islam in America. The ILM Foundation offers basic Islamic classes to assist Muslims to practice their faith in this society.

**IF:** How is Humanitarian Day different from other homeless feedings that take place throughout the year by other organizations?

**NS:** Humanitarian Day is unique for several reasons: It is the only day of the

feeling that is served out of four tables and 25 volunteers, on this day nearly 2,000 homeless are served by over 500 Muslim volunteers. The gift items

include hygiene packs, toys and ponchos. Also, UMMA Community Clinic coordinates a health fair offering various tests and education. Islamic Relief and ILM Foundation also lead the effort to spread this event nationally in over 15 cities that serve over 18,000 homeless collectively. This is the largest collective Humanitarian event during Ramadan led by Muslims in America.

**IF:** Do you think there are enough Muslims involved in working to make a social change?

**NS:** No, especially domestically. The theme for Coalition to Preserve Human Dignity for 2007 is to make Humanitarian Day a daily affair. Our incentive originates from our faith, which should have greater influence in our life to make a difference here in America. People are dying and children are crying out for help. Our blessing and opportunity in America is tied to answering their call for help. Muslims will be seen as heroes in their eyes, not as terrorists as the media depicts.

**IF:** What is the "Go Beyond the G.A.M.P." student athlete mentoring program?

**NS:** The youth activities are divided into the following three categories of recreational enrichment, educational support and community service. The recreational enrichment includes sports camps, after school cultural events and youth conferences. The community service activities include feeding the homeless in Downtown Los Angeles, graffiti removal and helping senior citizens. The educational support services include college and corporate tours, college preparation workshops, homework assistance and entrepreneurial project training.

**IF:** What has all this community service taught you, and what can it teach others?

**NS:** Charity is the proof of your faith. I learn my religion by serving others. I receive help from Allah by serving others. I am reminded how much Islam and Muslims are needed in this world. The wars are destroying, but in the name of Islam I am taught everyday we can rebuild it.


**IF:** What motivates you day after day to do what you do?

**NS:** I love Allah; and I want to show Allah that love in my action as our Prophet, peace be upon him, and his companions did.

**IF:** What are fields that American Muslims need to get more involved in?

**NS:** The field of community activism is wide open. I would like us to get involved in areas that change perceptions. Muslims from prominent communities should team up with Muslims from disadvantaged communities and exchange resources to remove the blight in and around the Muslim community. This is how we perpetuate the Ansari tradition of over 1,400 years ago. It is time to put our faith into action.

For more information on ILM Foundation, call the office at 325-294-3744 or visit their website at [www.ilmfoundation.com](http://www.ilmfoundation.com).



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## Ramadan's Over

By Fatima Khan

**THUMP-THUMP!**  
**THUMP-THUMP!**  
Mohsin, raced down the stairs of his house.

"Mooooooooooooom!!!! I want a BIG omelet with LOTS of cheese, and I want cereal, and I want orange juice, and I want a bagel, and I want a croissant, and I want—"

"Sweetie, you can't possibly eat that much. Let's not be greedy now."

"Mom, Ramadan is OVER, and I need to make up for all those meals that I missed, all those lunches I had to skip! Oh! That reminds me! I need to watch me some TV!! Didn't get to do any of that last month either!" Mohsin said as he sat down at the kitchen table.

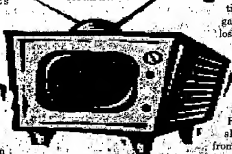
"For now, I'll just give you the omelet and toast; we'll see about the rest a bit later. And TV? I thought you stopped watching TV in Ramadan."

"Like I said, Mom, Ramadan's over!" Mohsin jumped off his chair. "Let me know when the

food's ready." He turned on the television and glanced himself on the floor in front of it. Within moments, he was engrossed.

After breakfast, Mohsin dashed out the front door, jumped on his bike, and sped to his friend Abdullah's house down the street.

Mohsin rang the doorbell. Abdullah opened the door with a copy of the Qur'an in his hand. "Assalamu alaikum!" Abdullah smiled, clearly happy to see his friend.



"Come on

in. What's up?" They walked inside the house and flopped on the couch in the living room.

"Nothing much, man; getting over Ramadan! What're you doing with that mu'hal?" asked Mohsin, surprised to see his

friend with the Qur'an even after Ramadan.

"Oh, nothing much, just reciting some Qur'an. I'm really missing Ramadan, and I'm trying to learn from it."

"How will you have enough time to recite with homework and everything?" asked Mohsin. I never have enough time for reciting the Qur'an, he thought to himself.

"I figure, if I have enough time to watch TV, then I definitely have enough time to recite! Plus, TV is becoming rewards instead of losing time."

Mohsin felt his conscience bothering him. Ramadan was not just about fasting for one month. He knew that even though Ramadan was over, he should take some good from it.

"Hey, why don't you do that too! I'll be great! We'll see who can finish first!" Abdullah said, excited.

Mohsin smiled. This was his chance. "Sounds good to me! Hand me another mu'hal so I can get a head start."

## Most Beautiful Names of Allah

R X M W K O A N O Y P Y X A D E W R W  
F I A L Q U D D U S Z O P O D Z U N Y J  
R L B F X B C T D I X O D Y Y T A I K Q  
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M H G A K A F E A M X K U U L K W E T  
M C C D Y Z Y K W H D Z H X T A Y E D S

Ar-Rahman

Ar-Rahim

Al-Malik

Al-Qudus

As-Salam

Al-Mu'min

Al-Muhaymin

Al-'Aziz

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# WHAT'S COOKIN'

Restaurant Review by Aidan Qasim Muhammad

## How about Sri Lankan?

I was discussing food with friends of mine and asked him for something different, new, and unique. His suggestion: Curry. Bowl in Tazara. "So I thought, great, more curries and banana rice." Being Pakistani, there is no need for further state out when your Mom is the head chef.

But I was in for a surprise.

While the name might mislead some to think it is an Indian eatery, the restaurant is actually Sri Lankan. People often associate Sri Lanka with the Tamil Tigers, the recent tsunami, and possibly the thirty years of civil war, but Sri Lanka has a much richer history.

Like the island nation of the southern tip of the Indian peninsula, Sri Lanka was colonized by the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, and is populated by two distinct groups—the Sinhalese and the Tamils, and has a healthy Muslim minority.

Rakshan Pillai, who is the business partner, Rajiv Lema, was an assistant to the president of the restaurant for five years. They have fostered the Sri Lankan atmosphere of harmony.

Indian food is an integral part of the Sri Lankan diet. To appreciate the cuisine, a sense of adventure and an open mind is necessary. Because the Curry House is serving the Indian food and you might be disappointed if that is what you want.

Despite the unpopularity that Sri Lankan food shares with Indian food, how did it get here? Except here in more built-in cities that is experienced as a "chicken" food, the South Indian food from Kerala and Tamil Nadu. So before the food, it is all based on the "mildly medium hot" scale.

The menu is huge, but I tried the Sri Lankan dishes that the buffet. There are many dishes to choose from, and each day the dishes vary, so there is a wide variety of choices on any given visit. One thing that is incredible is this banana boat sauce

that is truly unique in flavor. The food has a stronger hint of cardamom, cloves, and coconut milk, creating a soothing aroma appealing to the taste buds.

Much like Thai food, coconut milk is a staple ingredient. Most meats are marinated in it before being cooked. But there are distinctions, and these, distinctive matter.

For instance, one is the high and pleasurable dip related to the "choppers," a decent description of appetizers like virmicelli noodles often cooked in coconut milk, and used as a replacement to Indian naan.

Another banana rice, often "steamed" and mixed with vegetables (prepared "left" rice) or made into small "bites" (like "bites").

Hot pepper is light to an extent, bland, and does not stand on their own in flavor.

If your palate desires a bit more adventure, then I suggest two other things that are sure to tempt your taste buds.

One is a "chicken" dish, and the other is a "chicken" dish, and the other is a "chicken" dish.

With curry flavoring, and the other is a "chicken" dish, and the other is a "chicken" dish.

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# Depressed?

By Dr. Khalid Siddiq

Recent statistics show that depression is a common condition that affects about 121 million people worldwide. It spans no group. In fact, recent studies from the United Kingdom suggest that Muslim men may be at higher risk for depression.

Depression can be triggered by an event—the death of a loved one, a divorce, the loss of a job, or any major change in one's life.

Depression is not just a state of mind. It is related to physical changes in the brain and connected to an imbalance of neurotransmitters, a type of chemical that carries signals in the brain and nerves.

## Symptoms

One of the most recognized symptoms of depression is a profound feeling of sadness, hopelessness, or emptiness. There may be physical symptoms as well.

## Emotional

- Sadness throughout the day, nearly every day
- Loss of interest in or enjoyment of your favorite activities
- Feelings of emptiness or hopelessness
- Feeling stressed, nervous, or overwhelmed
- Trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Excessive or inappropriate feelings of guilt
- Irritability or restlessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide

## Physical

- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Change in appetite or weight
- Aches and pains
- Headache
- Back pain
- Digestive problems
- Dizziness

If you think you might have depression, see your doctor. For people diagnosed with depression, there are some things they can do help in addition to the treatment prescribed by their doctor.

## Don't bottle things up

Talking to a friend or family member about one's problems can be therapeutic.

Keeping active—Get outdoors and exercise, even if it's only a walk. It prevents dwelling on painful thoughts and feelings.

Eating properly—Eat a balanced diet. It's easy to lose weight and run low on vitamins when depressed.

Fun activities—Set some time aside regularly each week to do something one enjoys, such as exercising, reading, or a hobby.

Lifestyle change—A lot of people who have depression are perfectionists and tend to drive themselves too hard. Setting more realistic targets and reducing workload may help.

Take a break—Getting away from normal routine for a few days—even a few hours—can be helpful.

Individuals diagnosed with depression should not ignore the spiritual aspects of healing, in addition to the treatment prescribed by their doctor. Many Muslim scholars have given us the means to cure depression. For example, the book Medicine of the Prophet provides many recommendations for depression. An imam or religious scholar can be a valuable source of guidance.

See your doctor if you think you might have depression. Medications may be necessary in treating depression. Severe depression can result in suicidal thoughts. Take any such thoughts seriously. If you feel like giving up or feel like you might hurt yourself, get help immediately: call your doctor, go to the emergency room, or call 911.

Depression is a treatable condition, and overcoming one's embarrassment or fear of being stigmatized is often the biggest hurdle to being cured.

Dr. Siddiq is a co-founder of the UMMA Clinic and also works at the Al-Hikmah Center. He practices internal medicine in Orange County.

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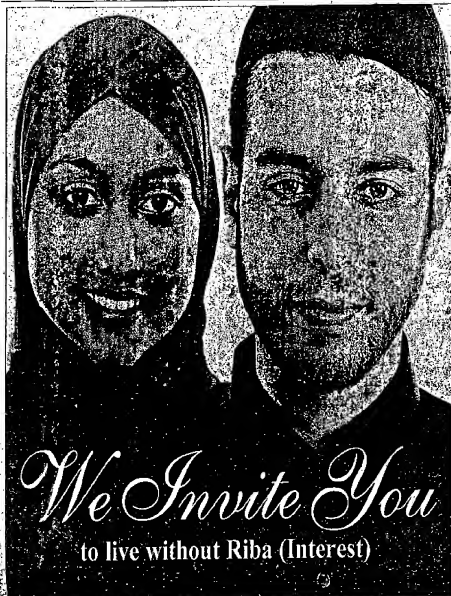
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## TAXI TO JANNAH: Shattering Stereotypes

By Salama Abdul Khaliq

Taxi to Jannah is a new play with Muslims as the central characters.

That's right, a Muslim hero. It means that the whole play revolves around him. In fact, the entire play is about him trying

to open a bazaar. And for once he is neither a cardboard stereotype nor a "sidekick" to a Caucasian protagonist, trying to clean up mess left by some swarthy, Middle Eastern character. There has to be a catch, right?

In the post-9/11 world, there can possibly be no positive portrayal of Muslims in American pop culture, let alone in the entertainment industry. Sure, Hollywood

could be crushed by a swinging ball of worship. Nardred goes home to his family and his God every night, and includes his frustration about the task at hand.

Nardred's luck turns after he picks up a woman, whom he takes out of jumping off a bridge by using reverse

psychology. The man overcomes his depression, and later suggests to the Muslim taxi driver that

his counseling skills are good enough to warrant offering their services

to the police. Nardred agrees on the job and eventually

raises the money needed to pay for his repairs and secure the first month's

rent. It's not exactly true but as expected and

Taxi to Jannah's plot is altruistic. It was written with a grand intention to correct misperceptions and present Muslim Americans as regular likeable and hardworking citizens who are just out to live their faith in peace and raise a family while pursuing the American dream.

In Jannah, the scene is set in a parking lot in Jannah, his hometown. The director is the Fox News mentalist and his audience must feel he would win and

does in usual good play. It's a successful formula very few dare to stray from.

Well, not quite. It seems that Taxi to Jannah isn't really a Hollywood production, although the director seems to be being staged in a market city may provide a family while pursuing the American

dream. The play is the best of both worlds. It's a

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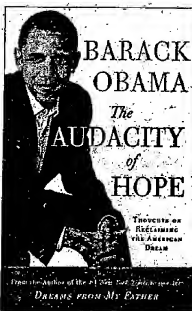
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## The Audacity of Hope



Reviewed by Soudes Kholoki

Barack Obama—Illinois Senator, democrat, lawyer, professor, first black president of the Harvard Law Review, and possible future candidate for the White House—has given us a reason to reclaim our faith in modern-day politics.

His new book, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, is a restorative and heartening work. At a time when campaigning has come to mean mudslinging and image-bashing rather than taking a good hard look at the core problems facing the US, *The Audacity of Hope* offers a sensible method of returning to the values this country was founded upon.

For one thing, Obama encourages Americans to reclaim their influence over legislation. Get involved in an issue that you're passionate about. It almost doesn't matter what it is, as long as you

school system, developing strategies to wean ourselves off foreign oil, expanding health care for kids. We give too much of our power away to the professional politicians, to the lobbyists, to cynicism. And our democracy suffers as a result," Obama states.

In addition to covering America's current political climate, Obama addresses a wide range of topics that are not as directly related to our government, including reducing teen pregnancy, strengthening family and traditional morals, and class inequality. However, rather than coming off as superior-minded or preachy, Obama's years of experience working with the poor give his points credence. As an African-American who grew up in Hawaii and abroad in Indonesia, Obama possesses a heartfelt understanding of "this world of immediate hunger, disappointment, grief, irrationality, and frequent hardship of the other 98 percent of the population—that is, the people that I'd entered public life to serve" that few of his colleagues on Capitol Hill hold.

Part of the magic of *The Audacity of Hope* is Obama's style of writing that is both modest and resolute. He is able to point out a problem, offer a solution, and motivate the reader all in one, a perfect example of which is taken from the book: "A government—that truly represents these Americans—that truly serves these Americans—will require a different kind of politics. That politics will need to reflect our lives as they are actually lived. It won't be pre-packaged, ready to pull off the shelf. It will have to be constructed from the best of our traditions and will have to account for the darker aspects of our past. We will need to understand just how we got to this place, this land of warring factions and tribal hatreds. And we will need to realize, perhaps despite all our differences, just how much we share: common hopes, common dreams, a hold

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## Don't Make These Investment Mistakes



By Saghir Aslam

Investing is a gradual process—purchasing some investments and selling others as the years go by. After a period of years, this can result in a mixture of investments that don't fit your overall investment strategy. Thus, periodically review your portfolio, watching out for the following mistakes.

You don't use an asset allocation strategy

Many investors select individual investments over the years, not considering the overall makeup of their portfolio. Add up all your investments and calculate what portion is invested in each investment category.

The basic categories are stocks, bonds, and cash, but each category has many subcategories. Since subcategories can have very different risk levels (i.e., blue chip and growth stocks have very different risk levels), review subcategories as well. Assess your current allocation and determine whether it fits your personal situation.

You have too many investments that aren't adding diversification to your portfolio

Diversification helps reduce the volatility in your portfolio, since various investments will respond differently to economic events and market factors. Yet it's common for investors to keep adding investments to their portfolio that are similar in nature. This does not add much in the way of diversification, while making the portfolio more difficult to monitor. Before adding an investment to your portfolio, make sure it will further diversify your investments. (Keep in mind that diversification does not ensure a profit or protect against loss in a declining market.)

Your portfolio's return is lower than benchmark returns

While everyone likes to think their portfolio is beating the market averages,

many investors simply aren't sure. Review the return of each component of your portfolio, comparing it to a relevant benchmark. While you may not want to sell an investment that has underperformed for a year or two, at least closely monitor any investments that significantly underperform their benchmarks. Next, calculate the overall rate of return of your portfolio and compare it to a relevant benchmark. Include all your investments—those in taxable accounts and in your retirement accounts. Also, be sure to compare your actual return to the return you targeted when setting up your investment program. If you aren't achieving your targeted return, you risk not reaching your financial goals. Now honestly assess how well your portfolio is performing. Are major changes needed to get it back in shape?

You Trade Frequently Without Adequate Research

In this fast-paced investment world, it's tempting to trade often based simply on what other people's recommendations. Yet, besides the tax and trading costs associated

with frequent trades, several studies have shown that frequent traders often underperform those who trade less frequently. Instead, purchase investments you are willing to hold onto for the long term.

You don't consider income taxes when investing

Ordinary income taxes on short-term capital gains and interest can go as high as 35%, while long-term capital gains and dividend income are taxed at rates not exceeding 15% (5% for taxpayers in the 10% or 15% tax bracket). Using strategies that defer income taxes for as long as possible can make a substantial difference in the ultimate size of your portfolio. Some strategies to consider include utilizing tax-deferred investment vehicles (such as 401(k) plans) and individual retirement accounts, minimizing portfolio turnover, selling investments with losses to offset gains, and placing assets generating ordinary income or that you want to trade frequently in your tax-deferred accounts.

Gretchen Krutz of the South Coast Interfaith Council, and Rene Castro of the National Conference for Community and Justice also spoke at the event.

The event was initiated by the Long Beach Police Department along with the Islamic Center of Long Beach.

"We want to create an environment, where people know they can be free from violence and not be attacked because of their race or gender or national origin or sexual orientation in this city," said Lt. Joseph Levy, representing the Long Beach Police Department.

### INTERFAITH IFTAR FROM PAGE 6

Rabbi Mark B. Goldfarb of Temple Israel addressed the importance of dialogue in building bridges. "Peace proves a partnership with God," Goldfarb said.

Shaikh Hisham from the Long Beach Islamic Center said that the three faiths had a common link to Prophet Ibrahim, through whom they are brethren.

Sherrel Johnson of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR),

## Preaching From the Pulpit: Allowable Political Activities of Mosques and Other Non-Profits



By Todd Gollinger

In the last few months, there has been a lot of news coverage about IRS investigations

into churches and charities regarding their political activities. One local church, Pasadena's All Saints Episcopal Church, is actively resisting IRS subpoenas regarding an anti-war/anti-Bush sermon given just a few days before the 2004 Presidential election. These recent occurrences demonstrate just how important it is for mosques and other non-profits to ensure that their political activities are within the limits of U.S. Tax Law.

The most common form of categorization for mosques and other non-profits is called a 501(c)(3), after the section of the tax law that grants their tax exempt status. Donations made to these groups, unlike those made to politicians or political groups, are deductible by the donor. Because donors to 501(c)(3)s are able to deduct their contribution, the organization is forbidden from "substantially" engaging in lobbying and absolutely prohibited from participating in any political campaign.

The difference between lobbying and a political campaign is that lobbying is an attempt to influence legislation while a political campaign elects a specific person to a governmental position. Here in California we have referendums or propositions, which are laws voted on by the public. These are considered legislation by the IRS and a 501(c)(3) can attempt to influence the outcome, as long as their efforts are not "substantial."

Unfortunately, the definition of "substantial" can be unclear. The IRS will examine the time devoted by staff and volunteers and the expenditures made in support of legislation. It is within

the discretion of the IRS, however, to determine whether the contributions and efforts of the group were substantial.

Charities, other than religious institutions, can elect to use the expenditure test under IRC 501(b). This allows them to avoid the subjective IRS test and instead rely on their actual expenditures. The organization would then be allowed to use up to 20% of the first \$500,000 spent in a given year, with the allowable percentage decreasing up to a total of \$1,000,000 spent on legislative campaigns. While this creates some additional paperwork for the charities because it lets charities know exactly how much they can spend, it might be wise for non-profits with substantial legislative activities to consider.

The prohibition against non-profit involvement in political campaigns, those in which a person is elected, is much stricter. Non-profits are completely prohibited from participating in these campaigns. Of course, mosques and charities can participate in election activities, such as voter registration drives or candidate forums, but they are absolutely prohibited from supporting any candidate.

If a non-profit does wish to hold a candidate's forum, they need to ensure that all candidates have the opportunity to speak at the same or similar event, that no one from the organization expresses direct support of any candidate, and that no fundraising occurs. Alternately, candidates can speak at non-profits as non-candidates, i.e. because of their position in the community, current elected office, or other reason. In these situations, however, both the candidate and representatives of the non-profit are forbidden from mentioning the election and the speaker is running for office.

Obviously, the regulation of non-profits can be complex. Hopefully this article has helped some community leaders understand exactly what mosques and charities can and cannot do in connection with politics. If any detailed questions arise, the IRS website has good resources, or you can consult with a qualified attorney.

Todd Gollinger is an attorney with Gill & Gollinger. He represents numerous charities and religious organizations. He can be reached at (949) 882-0010.

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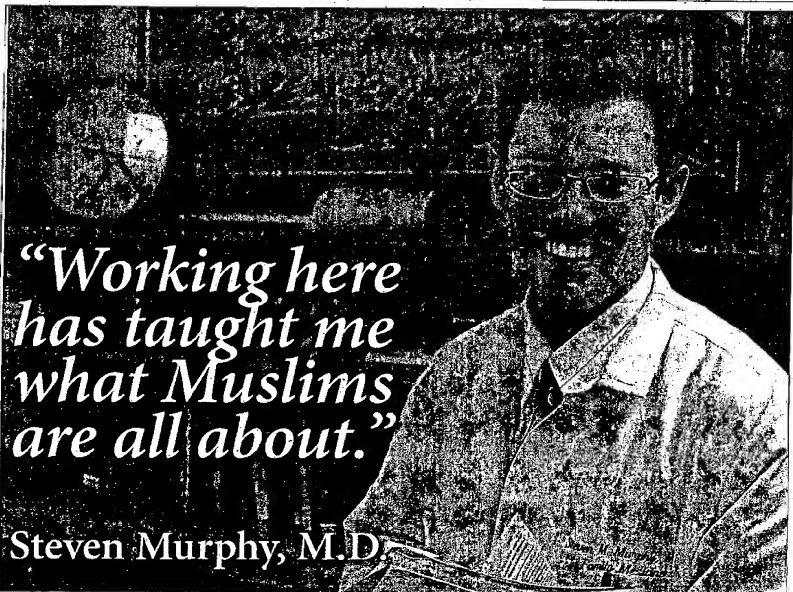
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# California Weekend Getaway: Yosemite National Park

By Affad Shaikh

Yosemite National Park is

National Park pass will allow access to all National parks in the US. Plan to avoid critical

camp sites, but reserve the spot in advance. If camping, I advise arriving early to get up your tent during sunlight, so planning your drive will be critical.

Looking for more comfort than a tent can offer? There are alternatives, which include lodging in the park as well as places outside the park, but remember that entrance fee. Peak seasons require you to have a two day minimum stay and advance booking.

There is one station at the entrance to the park with miles of one-way highways and steep inclines, so planning ahead will maximize your trip. After settling down, visit Yosemite Valley and enjoy the sunset and stars, which most people do not take the opportunity to do.

Half Dome is strenuous. I have seen kids as young as eight and people who are elderly hike it, but the hike is long (17 miles roundtrip), steep (close to 5000 foot elevation gain from where you begin to the top), high in altitude (8842 feet from sea level) and requires "climbing" the last quarter mile.

Fit hikers take 7 hours to make the round trip. Less fit and experienced hikers can take up to 12 hours. The goal should be to make it downhill by sunset, and your goal should be to make it to the peak no later than 3 PM. Park at Curry Village and take the bus to the Happy Isle

Trail head where the Half Dome hike begins. The free shuttle service ends at 10PM, so you want to make it on time, or else there is a painful walk to your car.

For gear, I suggest bringing plenty of water, a campstove, pack, a good investment trail map and Gatorade. Also, having worn-in hiking shoes helps, and a pair of speakers will do, however, downhill will be painful on your ankles. Bring a pair of sturdy gloves, because the last quarter mile requires that you hold onto a cable; if you forget, not to fret, you can find a pair at the cables, some hikers leave them there. Finally, bring a flashlight just in case your descent is after sunset.

Finally, after hiking all day, you might want to take advantage of eating out. For twelve dollars, you can enjoy a variety of food at the Buffet Cafeteria at Curry Village or a pizza, but both stop serving by 9:45 pm. There is a grocery store located at Yosemite Village, but the cafeteria is a good way to wind down after a hard day of hiking in the sun. Also for campers, there are community showers at Curry Village behind the Cafeteria. Use at your risk - bring a LARGE towel, slippers, and your own soap, but try not to

touch anything).



For Sunday, I suggest visiting some of the sightseeing spots or the Ansel Adams Museum, most of which you can drive to. There are numerous places you can visit. Also to get an idea of the beauty of the park, the Gene Autry Museum is holding an exhibit called, Yosemite: Art of an American Icon from September 2006 to January 2007.

For links, more inside information and other places of interest or activities at Yosemite, or to ask general questions or comments addressed please visit the Muslim Travel Guide blog at: <http://muslimtravelguide.blogspot.com>.

referred to as "the incomparable valley," and with over 1200 square miles of wilderness and 800 miles worth of hiking trails you can imagine the solitude and immensity of this preserved natural wonder.

There are two ways to see Yosemite: by driving in the valley and to the villages or by hiking the trails. Most people are content with driving, which I recommend to families with small children and elderly members - but I will focus on planning to hike Half Dome.

Like any trip, I suggest a certain degree of preparation. Plan a weekend retreat. There is a park entrance fee, but purchasing a

weekends like Fourth of July, Labor Day, Veterans Day, and Memorial Day. Ideally, your weekend visit should be before or after these weekends, which is still during peak season (May to September). Towards the end of the season the snow has largely melted, which might make the hike less spectacular, but in my opinion, it does not take away from the beauty of the park.

I suggest arriving early Friday evening, get situated and rested. Saturday should be physically intensive while Sunday should be leisurely "drive by" night around with departure depending on the drive back. Accommodations range in price, the cheapest is to set up a tent at one of the

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# in the footsteps of the PROPHETS

The following is the first in a series of articles Infocus will be running to highlight the lives of Prophets of the three Abrahamic religions and the peaceful nature of their message. Each piece will postulate a theme relevant to our times. The theme beforehand is "Peaceful Resistance."

By Abdussalam Mohamed

**M**ahatma Gandhi once said, "I like you Christ but I don't like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ." Gandhi, who achieved legendary status by leading a non-violent uprising against the British in his native India, became an exemplar for "peaceful resistance." His comments about Christians were directed at the British who occupied and plundered his homeland. He was keen to distinguish between the Christian faith and the actions of its followers.

During the Civil Rights movement, Martin Luther King Jr. emulated Gandhi by preaching non-violence. Ironically, both men were assassinated. Nelson Mandela treaded in his predecessor's footsteps during the Apartheid regime and paid the

## Peaceful Resistance: Is it a modern concept?

price by spending most of his life in jail. He too earned a place in the pantheon of peaceful warriors.

As we stand, terrorism flares up around the world, humanity seems in need now more than ever for the likes of Gandhi, King and Mandela, who are often regarded as icons of peaceful resistance. But is the concept a modern one?

Prophets in the Bible and the Qur'an are honored by followers of the three Abrahamic faiths. Although their stories are almost identical, the Qur'an is especially reverent in its approach. In Islam, infallibility of character is key to prophethood. Allah, or God, only chooses the best among His minds to prepare the chosen ones for the onerous task of preaching salvation.

Prophets and messengers are breed apart because they are supposed to be exemplary because of behavior to be emulated and followed. Lapses of judgment or improprieties of character would certainly undermine message and messenger and drive followers away. Politicians in our time, for instance, fall easily for as little as questionable behavior. How could Prophets be held to a different standard when their message addresses humanity's very salvation?

Prophets share a common theme: uniformity of message. All preached the same precept: worship one God. When Prophet Musa, or Moses, stood in Pharaoh's court and preached that precept in face of overwhelming odds. Weak and with only his brother Aaron as an ally, he asked for the impossible: let thousands of enslaved children of Israel go. Moses could have asked for an army or perhaps himself tried to stir up rebellion by enlisting followers to take up arms against the Egyptians. He did neither. Spilling blood to free his people was not an option in spite of Pharaoh's overwhelming injustice. In the end, Moses' Jihad triumphed. His faith in a just God eventually defeated the most powerful nation of his time without

firing a single arrow.

In 610 AD, Muhammad, the son of Abdullah, who for months withdrew to a cave to worship the God of Abraham, would change the fate of humanity. At the time Arabs did not have a civilization like the Greeks or the Persians. They were nomads whose only claim to notoriety was confined to hospitality and mastery of the Arabic language. When the illiterate Muhammad came down with the Qur'an, he put their most eloquent poets to shame. While preaching his message in Makkah, Muhammad never once advocated violence, even though his followers were openly persecuted. He lived thirteen years in his native town peacefully preaching his faith and putting up with the most onslaught of physical and verbal abuse. Thirteen years of unbearable hardship went by before he was forced to flee to Medina.

There he established a state and was later forced to wage few defensive wars against his enemies. When the Makkans broke a peace treaty, he marched on his hometown at the helm of ten thousand men. Upon his peaceful entrance to the holy city his enemies were brought before him for arbitration. It was his chance to get even and it seemed like fair reciprocity. However, the merciful Prophet took only one glance at his former enemies before proclaiming, "O, you are free men!" These were not the words of a man who spread his faith with the sword or brought anarchy to the world, they were the words of a man God called "a mercy to mankind."

Before Gandhi, King or Mandela brought about the idea of peaceful resistance, mighty prophets of God pioneered the concept, practiced it to perfection and were able to win the battle of hearts and minds without resorting to violence. They never invaded and plundered countries, killed in the name of God or mortified hatred of other faiths. They also didn't fly planes into buildings, behead prisoners on the Internet, plant car bombs or wage suicidal

terrorist attacks on civilians.

Today, many who claim to be followers of Prophet Moses, Christ and Muhammad practice everything these mighty Prophets did not preach and preach everything they repudiated, namely hatred and random acts of violence to achieve political or religious goals. What is the difference between Pat Robertson and Osama Bin Laden for example? Both preach hatred. While the former has the luxury of being in the camp of the most powerful nation, the latter resorts to violence as an end that justifies the means.

As far as Muslims are concerned, there is much soul searching to be done. In spite of the West's many sins against the Islamic world, Muslims today must take a critical look at themselves and wonder if they are truly the teachings of their Prophet. Detraction is one cannot always shoulder the blame for injustices befalling the Islamic world. The West was reacted to the Danish cartoons or to US troops' fallible words was certainly not in line with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. Muslims must open up to criticism and learn to respond only with love, kindness and wisdom when verbally attacked.

But this message applies to people of all faiths too, and not just to Muslims. Jews and Christians must also embrace the concept of non-violence in the tradition of God's mighty prophets. They must denounce hate and aggression being done in their name.

Injustice will not prevail. That is a promise God made in the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an. By embracing non-violence, the children of Abraham must celebrate their faiths and lead by example, by being a light unto the nations. If they were to fail, Gandhi's words would easily apply to all of them. "I like you Moses/Jesus/Muhammad but I don't like your Jews/Christians/Muslims. Your Jews/Christians/Muslims are so unlike your Moses/Jesus/Muhammad."

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## No Veiled Threat

By Sheema Khan

Last week, I stopped at a local mosque to offer my sunset prayers before heading off to a restaurant for an iftar dinner with friends (iftar is the meal for breaking the daylight fast during the month of Ramadan). I met a pleasant young woman, who had removed her niqab (face veil) in the privacy of the women's section. She was gracious to all, offering dates and milk to break the fast. Her demeanor exuded a generous spirituality. While we spoke, she gently exhorted her children to stop running, restraining her exasperation when they disobeyed. What mother hasn't gone through the same?

At the restaurant, a niqabi woman came up to me when I did not recognize at first. Her eyes glinted with familiarity. "Assalamu alaikum, Sheema," she greeted me on TV that day. "I recognized her voice. We had first met 15 years ago and had started an instant friendship. She had taken us to different districts where we were both married with kids. She had memorized the entire Koran during that time and was now teaching women and children to do the same. I felt humbled in the presence of her knowledge."

I respect women who wear the niqab. At Harvard, after much spiritual reflection, I donated the hijab (headscarf) and also tried the niqab—for all of one hour. I found it stifling and unnatural. Yet others don't. And their choices should be respected. In some places, women are forced by the state to cover up. In other places, some have exercised their own choice to do so. At a recent scientific conference in Dubai,

motelligent, assertive niqabis who discussed current research with both genders. What is the big deal?

The niqab has been in the news recently often in the most unflattering terms. These new WMs (women in Muslim dress) seem to evoke the same fear once reserved for real Muslims (weapons of mass destruction). The most vocal critics are European men in positions of power, with feminists being equally vocal or mute. Few have taken the time to understand the issues from veiled women themselves.

The debate is eerily similar to the discourse that took place during the British occupation of Egypt in the late 1800s. Intent on controlling the natives, the Empire sought to strip away indigenous Egyptian identity. In the colonial hierarchy, Victorian England was the pinnacle of civilization; the rest had to be civilized.

Lord Cromer (Dwelyn Baring), the first British proconsul of Egypt, viewed Islam as the "other"—a faith utterly devoid of any good. In particular, he focused on the dress (i.e. the veil) and culture of Muslim women as emblematic of their oppression and inferiority. They were in need of rescue—by the Empire. He pushed the feminist envelope to ostensibly liberate Egyptian women. Yet during his rule, he greatly reduced women's access to education. When he returned to England, he opposed the women's movement at first. Then, feminism was good for the colonized, but not for the colonizer.

Many members of the Egyptian elite internalized the superiority of British culture and championed Lord Cromer's rule. One such person was Qasim Amin, who published the controversial treatise *Liberalism in Islam* in 1899. In it, he derided all of Egyptian society for its inferiority. Women were described in the most misogynistic terms. In contrast, the apocryphal Amin extolled the virtues of the European male.

Amin was not interested in substantive issues of equality, such as women's education, health or employment. His main focus was on the veil, as the symbol of a society's life. It represented backwardness. He called on women to discard so that Egypt could join the

ranks of the civilized. He had as much interest in the welfare of Egyptian women as did Lord Cromer.

The reaction was predictable. An uproar ensued, with the greatest outrage expressed by nationalists. While many of them were not particularly religious, they championed the veil in reaction to colonialist design.

Thus began a series of chain reactions, wherein the veil became a symbol, acquiring new meanings that were never part of classical Islamic teachings. It was a banner of resistance in Algeria (against the French) and Iran (against the Shah), a response to autocratic rulers who banned the veil as a symbol of inferiority. These simplistic debates deflected attention away from examination of substantive issues. Complex problems could simply be solved by either donning or discarding the veil.

Which brings us to current events. In a Monty Pythonesque scenario, the British political establishment demands that a particular minority (Muslims) integrate into British society by co-opting a minority within that minority to change its appearance. British Prime Minister Tony Blair and House of Commons leader Jack Straw have appropriated the veil as a symbol of "separateness" and an impediment to integration.

In the 1890s, it symbolized backwardness and an impediment to civilization. Now, it is a symbol of integration. It is dangerous to think that discarding the niqab will engender a new path toward assimilation—especially into a society as hierarchical as that of the British. In a recent study by the House of Commons, Muslim students were found to be far more tolerant than their non-Muslim counterparts. By placing full focus on the Muslim community, the government has abdicated its responsibility in the integration impasse. It also has embarked on a dangerously divisive path.

If history is an indication, we can expect a counter-reaction. Especially at a time when an increasing number of Muslims see the "war on terror" as a "war on Islam," it is critical that color heads (covered or not) prevail, so that issues can be discussed objectively and dispassionately.

## Reject the Political Muslim-bashing Smears



By Farver Ahmed and Nihad Awad

There has been much sound and fury in certain circles about the American Muslim community's support for Keith Ellison and his campaign to represent Minnesota's Fifth Congressional District.

A handful of right-wing bloggers, agenda-driven commentators and political operatives have used scurrilous smear tactics in an attempt to derail his campaign and to marginalize American Muslim voices. These smears and distortions send an un-American message of intolerance and bigotry.

We are proud of our personal donations to Ellison's campaign. He has proven himself to be an effective legislator and his commitment to social justice is worthy of admiration. We believe his election will be a powerful message to the world about America's commitment to religious inclusion and tolerance.

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We understand the fear some Americans have of all things Muslim and Islamic. We hear these fears when visiting temples, synagogues and churches. We see the fear in people's eyes when we

board an aircraft.

The current wave of terror committed in the name of Islam by a tiny minority of radical individuals makes it all too easy to attack Islam and stereotype Muslims. Yet a look beyond the violence in headlines reveals a more complex situation.

When churches in the Occupied Territories were vandalized, apparently in reaction to comments on Islam by Pope Benedict, major Muslim organizations condemned the violence and reached out for dialogue. Our organization also raised money to repair the damaged churches.

At the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), we are proud of our record of interfaith understanding. We are also proud of our commitment to peace and our repeated condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, whether carried out by individuals, groups or states.

A CAIR statement released on the fifth anniversary of 9/11 said, "As American Muslims... we will not allow terrorist groups like Al-Qaida to be the voice of Muslims or the representation of Islam to the rest of the world."

Other CAIR initiatives include our "Mos in the Name of Islam" online petition, signed by hundreds of thousands of Muslims, and the Islamic religious ruling (fatwa) repudiating religious extremism and violence (see [www.tair.com/fatwa.htm](http://www.tair.com/fatwa.htm)).

When President Bush visited a Washington, D.C. mosque immediately after the 9/11 attacks, he met with a CAIR official. Over the years, CAIR representatives have been at numerous discussions about religious freedom with Bush, Rice, Al Gore, Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, and many members of other top government officials. CAIR officials have also been invited to the FBI to participate in its press conferences.

In a desperate bid to boost sagging poll numbers, an Ellison opponent sent campaign material to voters smearing him as being linked to terrorism, all because he accepted donations from Muslims like us.

This type of guilt by association has been tried in the past. Fortunately, the vast majority of

SEE MUSLIM BASHING... PAGE 33

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# Lebanon's War With Cluster Bombs

By Saree Makdisi

Of all the statistics to emerge from Israel's recent war on Lebanon, the most shocking concerns the number of cluster bombs that Israel dropped on or fired into Lebanon.

A cluster bomb is made up of a canister that opens and releases hundreds of individual bomblets, which are dispersed and explode over a wide area, showering it with molten metal and lethal fragments.

About 40% of the bomblets dropped by Israel (many of which were American-made) did not explode in the air or on impact with the ground. They now detonate when someone disturbs them—a soldier, a farmer, a shepherd, a child attracted by the lure of a shiny metal object.

Cluster bombs are, by definition, inaccurate weapons that are designed to affect a very wide area unpredictably. If they do not discriminate between civilian and military targets when they are dropped, they certainly do not discriminate in the months and years after the end of hostilities, when they go on killing and maiming anyone who happens upon them.

When the count of unexploded cluster bomblets passed 100,000, the United Nations' undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, Jan Egeland, expressed his disbelief at the scale of the problem.

"What's shocking and, I would say to me, completely immoral," he said, "is that 90% of the cluster-bomb strikes occurred in the last 72 hours of the conflict, when we knew there would be a resolution, when we really knew there would be an end of this."

That was on Aug. 30 by which time UN

teams had identified 359 separate cluster-bomb sites.

Since then, the true dimensions of the problem have become even clearer: 770 cluster-bomb sites have now been identified. And the current U.N. estimate is that Israel dropped between 2 million and 3 million bomblets on Lebanon, of which up to a million have yet to explode.

In fact, it is estimated that there are more unexploded bomblets in southern Lebanon than there are people. They lurk in tobacco fields, olive groves, on rooftops, in farms, mixed in with rubble. They are injuring two or three people every day, according to the United Nations, and have killed 20 people since the cease-fire in August.

"What we did was insane and monstrous," one Israeli commander admitted to the newspaper *Hanariv*. "We covered entire towns in cluster bombs."

Egeland noted, the majority of these bombs were dropped in the last three days of the war—a time when the U.N. resolution to end the fighting had been agreed on, when the war was virtually over, when it was clear that Israel had failed to accomplish its declared objectives in launching this campaign.

Dropped so late in the war, it's hard to imagine what specific military objective these bombs could possibly have been meant to accomplish. Instead, they seem to have been dropped as a final, monstrous act of justice, as a war waged against

an entire population. The vast majority of the 1,300 Lebanese killed by Israeli bombardments were civilians, one in three was a child.



Lebanese men grieve at the funeral of a child killed in the Israeli attacks against Lebanon this year.

With 100,000 innocent people trapped in the south because they could not, or dared not, flee on roads that Israel was indiscriminately bombing every day, Israel's justice minister declared that they were all—men, women and children—"terrorists who are related in some way to Hezbollah."

Nor was this his view alone. The Israelis dropped leaflets warning that "any vehicle of any kind traveling south of the Litani River will be bombed, on suspicion of transporting rockets, military equipment and terrorists." The Israeli chief of staff was especially explicit in ordering to "cut

Lebanon, he said. "As simple as that." Israel carried out 2,000 air raids and fired 160,000 artillery projectiles into Lebanon, a tiny country. That's about two air raids and 40 projectiles per square mile.

But the punishment was not evenly distributed. Israel's war was aimed specifically at Lebanon's Shiite population. Shiite villages in Beirut were destroyed, but other neighborhoods remained untouched. Shiite villages in the south were obliterated—literally wiped from the surface of the Earth—while nearby Christian villages escaped unscathed, mercifully able to shelter their Shiite neighbors.

Israeli officials said this was a war against Hezbollah, that Hezbollah was hiding in the midst of the population. But this wasn't a war against Hezbollah. It was a war to punish the entire population for its support of the guerrillas.

Not only was Hezbollah not hiding behind civilians, it fought to be obvious. It was the first instance in the history of the world at the civilians themselves. To direct such violence at one community, one religious group, one minority—and to deny them the ability to return safely home—was what this war was all about.

To drop two or three bomblets for every man, woman and child in southern Lebanon—after having wiped out their homes, smashed their communities, destroyed their livelihoods—to wage war against their all—was to wage war against their very souls.

And we supplied the weapons.

Saree Makdisi is a professor of English and comparative literature at UCLA.

## WHERE THE CROSS MEETS THE CRESCENT

Reflections on Muslim and Christian Spirituality in the Southland

By Rev. Connie Regener

Note: This month's column provides a model for answering a recent letter sent to a local Muslim organization from a local Christian pastor.

Dear Brother, I am glad to provide this information concerning your impression that "there is no congruent theological evidence that the Allah of Islam is the same source as Jehovah of Christianity and Judaism." Rev. Bill Baker, an expert on this topic, in his book *More in Common Than You Think*, states, "Indeed, the universality of believers in the One God, along with numerous biblical passages make clear that the God of the Bible does not special allegiance or commitment to any nation or state today. Believers in God transcend the checkerboard of political systems and human ideologies, and those who submit to and obey the teachings of God, regardless of where they are found throughout the world, are, in reality, spiritually related and thus become the only nation, a spiritual nation of the Holy One" (p. 42).

You also refer to the "globalization of terrorism in the name of Islam," but this is a selective statement that falsely implies a cause and effect relationship between Islam and terrorism. The same inappropriate comparison can be made of Christianity during the Crusades, or the Jewish adoption of Zionism against the Palestinian claim of the right of return to the disputed Holy Land. A careful study of all three religions reveals that no one

is the other. It is the fundamentalist or radical elements of any religion that are a danger to civil society. Again, a simple literature search easily reveals excellent expositions of this topic by Dr. Scott Appleby in his *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalism Around the World*, and Religious Fundamentalisms and Global Conflicts.

You call for a dialogue between the Sunnis and Shites to stop the killing. This second suggestion is also flawed, the bloody war between the Catholics and Protestants, or the animosity among the Islamic, Reform, and Orthodox Jews. Surely, an experienced pastor such as yourself is aware that all religions find it harder to get along with those who have divergent beliefs about their own religion than among those of other religions.

You sarcastically dismiss the suggestion of theological equality between Christianity and Islam. Indeed, it is a serious and puzzling problem that the three Abrahamic religions cannot agree on what is sacred revelation and therefore what is authoritative. But all three religions call for repentance and reconciliation with the Creator God, and for charity to one's neighbors. The many parallels between Christianity and Islam are detailed in Rev. Baker's book, which was previously referenced. This is a must-read for a pastor such as yourself who attempts religious commentary.

You also mention the "Triumphalism of Islam," and question how God honors the intentions of the suicide bombers. Again, this is deeply selective. Triumphalism has resurged in its ugliest form. Christianity, also, as detailed in the LA Times exposé of the Trinity Broadcasting Network, defining Christian Triumphalism as the doctrine of the heretical prosperity doctrine. In each case, Triumphalism causes its adherents to blindly violate the rights of others and to turn a deaf ear to reasoned plea. It is no less as its Jewish version, Zionism. Triumphalism in any

form is duty bound to oppose it. I agree with you that imposing any political agenda—due to Triumphalism or any other distortion—in the name of God is small-minded. I would go even further and

You also refer to the "globalization of terrorism in the name of Islam," but this is a selective statement that falsely implies a cause and effect relationship between Islam and terrorism. The same inappropriate comparison can be made of Christianity during the Crusades, or the Jewish adoption of Zionism.

say that it is unrighteous and shameful. Nevertheless, since good people can also shamelessly disagree as to the will of Allah, it is even more important that rules of civility be observed.

As you may recall during the United States Civil Rights Movement of the

1960's, it was the Ku Klux Klan who misappropriated the Christian message in order to oppress certain segments of society. This abuse was tolerated by Christian moderates who valued order and comfort more than justice. It is significant that it wasn't the moderates who caused change, but those who practiced civility and non-violence (although they experienced violence in return). Yes, I would agree with you that Muslims should challenge fundamentalist Islamists in the same way that some Christians took on slavery, segregation, lynching, and social injustices.

As a Christian pastor, I encourage you to engage in dialogue that conforms to the plea for civility that the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) called for at a new conference in October, to good scholarship, and to the rules of logic. Above all, let us stand shoulder to shoulder with the Muslim community in denouncing all forms of violence in the name of anyone's God.

And that is where I find that the cross meets the crescent.

Rev. Connie Regener, a graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, is a religious commentator in the Southland.

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## Build Bridges of Understanding

By Sabiha Khun



**O**ften seemingly well-intentioned editorials and public discourse are characterized by broad-brush statements about Islam and Muslims.

One of the oft-repeated canards is that Muslims have not condemned violence or have done little to condemn it. Such perception unfortunately translates into prejudice against Muslims. Recent polls show that nearly 4 in 10 Americans admit to prejudice against Muslims, with 3 in 4 refusing to live next to Muslims.

Ordinary Americans cannot be entirely blamed for their attitudes as they are fed a steady diet of negative news pertaining to Islam and Muslims. But a careful study of the lesser-covered stories beyond the headlines will show that the negative attitudes toward Islam and Muslims are often the result of ignorance, which can be overcome by a dose of reality.

Muslim leaders have and will continue to speak out against violence in the name of Islam for it is Islam that teaches us to value human life. These Muslims who react violently to protest cartoons or speeches do so despite the teachings of Islam, which advocates peace and justice for all people.

Muslims have condemned the 9-11 attacks on our country. Pages of these condemnations are posted on our Web site at [www.scaim.com/bin/911statements.html](http://www.scaim.com/bin/911statements.html).

The Council on American-Islamic Relations has run full-page ads in *Wired* magazine public-service announcements condemning

terrorism, has held protests and candlelight vigils and has initiated "Not in the Name of Islam" online campaigns. CAIR members have spoken at churches and synagogues, issued numerous statements and conducted hundreds of interviews in our struggle to relay the message of peace to our fellow Americans.

Some Muslims erroneously resorted to violence to protest against Pope Benedict XVI's inaccurate comments about Islam. However, missing from the headlines were gestures for dialogue from Muslims and the unequivocal condemnation of violence. At CAIR, we went further and raised money to repair the churches that were damaged in the misguided attacks.

Prophet Muhammad's teachings continue to inspire most of the 1.5 billion Muslims to be kind, tolerant and loving to all people. Unfortunately, most Americans judge Muslims by the sensational headlines of violence and rarely have a chance to

correct their misperceptions by interacting with the millions of Muslims who are their neighbors, doctors, teachers, engineers, nurses etc.

We Muslims will continue to stand for justice and condemn violence in the name of our faith whenever and wherever it occurs. We ask others to join us not by the minuscule minority of extremists among us. Stereotyping in us-American and hurts our national interest at home and abroad.

It is time our fellow Americans made the effort to learn about Islam and Muslims. More than ever, we must remain united as a nation striving to bring peace and harmony to our world through education and mutual understanding. My office stands ready to offer lectures, seminars and workshops to build a harmonious community. Contact me at (407) 648-1660 or [sahib@scair.com](mailto:sahib@scair.com).

Sabiha Khun is executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) - Orlando.

## AN INTERFAITH VIEW

### Whose Moderation?

By Lawrence Swaim



**N**o sooner had the U.S. political class become aware of Islam than it began trying to manipulate its future. With a great cry it was announced that America would forthwith encourage a hitherto unknown "moderation" to save the West from religiously motivated extremism. This paradox was known as the "Moderate Muslim."

The only problem was that the Muslim administration and the Pentagon right and its neoconservative allies—get to define who a moderate and who isn't. To them, the moderate Muslim personified a "liberal" position; he will never, ever criticize the Bush administration and never, ever criticize "our greatness" in the name of Islam.

The real issue of whether "Great Lizard" has it, is how "Islamic" are "framed" Lakoff is professor of cognitive science at UC Berkeley who believes that whoever frames the debate, decides the rules. If someone says that all Muslims are traitors, you may lose the debate. If you try to prove you're not because you're accepting the frame of the right, it's on the other hand, you create your own frame (that this aspect and some religious philosophy are fundamental to both Islamic and American values) you may do better.

The problem with the "Moderate Muslim" is that it is a frame that is an intrinsically dangerous enterprise. If the MM is the only Muslim the US can talk to, does that mean that all the other potential "terrorists" (The "Moderate Muslim" frame also feeds into the hands of the West to renege Islam to suit its own interests. The reality is that Muslims often see the world differently, and that's okay. Muslims have something to say that the West needs to hear, even if it's something hard for the West to listen to.

Negative framing happens often in American discourse. "You're an anti-Semite" says the poster on the wall when a liberal dines to criticize Israel

The liberal, since he values civility in discourse, awkwardly tries to defend himself. But by accepting the frame of his opponent, he ends up sounding like he has something to hide. Neoconservatives know that if you throw enough mud, some of it sticks.

Frames can also be used by intergroup leaders to manipulate public opinion. President Bush has recently begun to talk about Muslims who want to restore an Islamic Caliphate. Now, there is about as much chance of the Ottoman Caliphate being restored as I have of playing shortstop for the New York Yankees. But when Bush refers to something, it tends to make the idea attractive to undecided people who despise Bush's foreign policy. Therefore the number of Muslims who like the Caliphate idea goes from 500 percent to maybe 100 percent. And if you don't think that's what Bush wants to create more straw men than he and his policy can use to frighten the American people, how do you think he's playing attention.

President Bush did something similar during the war in Lebanon. "Everybody" said that we were fighting Islamic fascists. Bush said—and suddenly Islamic (or Islamist) fascists became the new buzzword. (The reason has used for years, but this was Bush's effort to slip it into popular discourse.) But since when are we fighting anybody in Lebanon?

Whoever frames the war was between Israelis and Hezbollah.

A new frame can be found for discrediting about Islam in the West and political Islam generally. That is, I think, the most powerful tool for the decision of a Muslim to themselves.

Whichever frame we use, it will be those that Muslims themselves control and can define (or redefine) according to their own needs. Last, their religious in the West. Muslims want to define their relationship with God and society based on conscience, not on the imperial whims of the rich and powerful. That form of spiritual and intellectual freedom is an important aspect of religious liberty.

Lawrence Swaim is the Executive Director of the Interfaith Project, a Washington, DC-based organization. He taught for eight years at Pacific College, and has academic specialties in American Studies and American literature. His column addresses current affairs from an American Christian and interfaith perspective.

## DISCRIMINATION

FROM PAGE 31

Americans rejected such tactics when the "other" of the day included Catholics, Irish immigrants, Jews or Asians.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

We are clearly living at a time of challenge and controversy. In a campaign as important as this one, and in a time as trying as ours, it is perfectly acceptable to challenge the ideas and policy positions of any candidate. But smears, distortions and unfounded myth by association are

by people of conscience.

In endorsing Ellison, the American Jewish World wrote: "Voice could make an emphatic statement—one that would gain national and international attention—by casting their ballots for Keith Ellison."

The election of an African-American Muslim supported by Muslims, Christians and Jews will be among the finest displays of American democracy—one that will reverberate across the globe.

Fareez Ahmed is board chairman of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the nation's largest Muslim civil liberties group. Nihad Awad is CAIR's national

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# Case Study

## Orphan Programs

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN A CHILD'S LIFE

Handi is 11 years old and lives in Mlinda, Kenya. His father died of natural causes leaving behind a wife and six children. His death was a shock to the family. Handi's mother, Fatuma, was nine months pregnant at the time. It was difficult for them ahead.

At the time, Handi's father died, the family could no longer afford to pay rent. Homeless, they built a small hut in their neighbor's plot of land. Months later, they sell the land and sleep in the same night-roof hut. During the day, they are asked to leave.

"I don't begin to tell you how hard it is to be Fatuma," said Handi. "My children cry at night and beg with their eyes to be controlled. There was no one out."

At Islamic Relief Center, currently, Handi's family is getting help. They are now allowed to live in a permanent house. Handi's mother, Fatuma, is now a member of the community. Handi's mother, Fatuma, is now a member of the community. Handi's mother, Fatuma, is now a member of the community.

Handi is happy and doing well in most subjects. He is also a good student. His school is in the morning. His school is in the morning. His school is in the morning. His school is in the morning. His school is in the morning.

There are thousands of orphans like Handi worldwide. You can make a difference in a child's life. Sponsor an orphan today!

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## American Muslims: Increasing Political Participation

**E**lection season is upon us once again, and American Muslims are increasingly engaging the political process throughout the country.

A recent survey conducted by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) shows that the alienation felt by American Muslims post 9/11

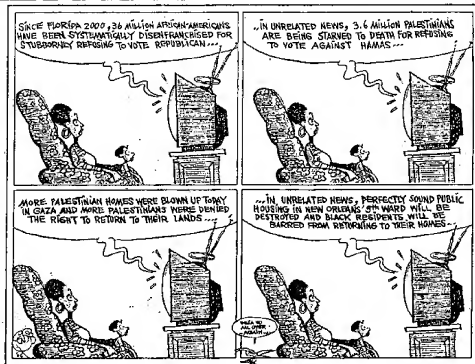
has not lessened their political participation. We have seen the results of our failure to influence America's foreign policy in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, and elsewhere. We have witnessed the erosion of our civil liberties by the Patriot Act. We have seen our community become targets of the media as well as by politicians seeking office, and we have too few friends in public office who defend us from these unjustified attacks. We have become aware of the anti-immigrant and xenophobic

It is high time for the American Muslim community to realize that our ability to vote is a strength that should not be wasted. In the Presidential elections of 2000 and 2004, a small percentage of votes in a few states could have significantly altered the outcome.

As freedom and that American Muslim are integrating into the American political system after 9/11's decline. The media theories of what caused the 9/11 attacks have led to a new wave of hate against American Muslims, and the war on terror and the Iraq War. In addition to CAIR, the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) and the American Muslim Alliance (AMA) are the main driving forces for increasing the political participation of American Muslims.

This election year is also the first in which an American Muslim candidate has won a congressional primary. Keith R. Ellison, a Democrat from Minnesota's 6th Congressional district, has won the democratic primary and is considered the front runner in his district. If elected, he will become the first American Muslim in Congress.

In addition to Ellison, other American Muslims are in the ballot in various states for congress and the state senate. Locally, Southern California businessman and Muslim community activist Bill Dabbas is running for Anaheim City Council. We applaud the increasing participation of American Muslims in American politics. Since the attacks of 9/11, we have all become aware of the importance of not only participating in American society and not having a say in formulating our



### Muslims should heed Muslim Comics path

I enjoyed reading your article on Muslim comedians. It is encouraging to see Muslims penetrating the boundaries of American media and projecting such honest images of Islam. These are the Muslims that perform jihad everyday of their lives in their own personal struggle of fighting the negative images and stereotypes people so often associate with Muslims.

I also hope that other Muslims follow their footsteps not only in comedy but also journalism, literature, radio and other media-related fields.

Tasneem Hameed  
Cerritos, CA

### Proud of American Ramadan Film

It was heartwarming to see in last month's issue the article about a Muslim American filmmaker who directed a film that portrays the American Muslim experience in the holy month of Ramadan. Especially after being exposed to such negative coverage of Muslims in the American Media day after day, it puts a smile on my face and brings joy to my heart to see

## Letters to the Editor

that Muslims around America are trying to build bridges with people of all faiths. The film includes commentary by a Jewish Rabbi, Christian doctor and a Muslim Scholar. The article was inspiring and motivated me to increase dialogue and understanding among my fellow neighbors, co-workers and friends of other faiths.

Sunmye Salama  
Los Angeles, CA

### "We're not with Stupid!"

The best way to get our country back, and to especially send a better message to the rest of the world is for all Muslim Americans to wear a shirt with a photo of President Bush and a finger pointing to him which says, "We're not with Stupid!" Everyone around the world would finally understand that bad presidents happen to good people. However, the only people who are allowed to wear these shirts, would be people who actually VOTE. If you don't vote, sorry, you can't say anything to criticize the current administration because you didn't do much to help get them out. So you're technically part of the "stupid" on the t-shirt. (This

includes you MSA's!) So please send a clear message to our allies abroad, to a world which has turned hostile to American that Muslim in America are "not with stupid!" VOTE on Nov. 7th.

Khalid Ghazi  
Mission Viejo, CA

### Najee Ali

Najee Ali is indeed a true activist and your profile of him shed light on how we can put our own faith into action. Many times we get caught in our own lives, earning a living, and living the American dream, and we forget about others who are less fortunate than us. This attitude is in complete contradiction to the teachings of Islam. Individuals like Ali remind of the true meaning of a Muslim, one who is a leader in bringing about positive change in himself and others.

Mubenna Siddiqi  
Lancaster, CA

**Correction:** In the October 2005 InFocus, an interview with the author of the book *Building Bridges* for the CAIR-SPFA Bandwidth Project for InFocus project was published. The author's name was misspelled as "Mubenna Siddiqi" and the book's title was misspelled as "Building Bridges for the CAIR-SPFA Bandwidth Project for InFocus project".

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**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

April 25, 2006

# Fact Sheet

## Immigration Security Checks—How and Why the Process Works

### Background

All applicants for a U.S. immigration benefit are subject to criminal and national security background checks to ensure they are eligible for that benefit. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the Federal agency that oversees immigration benefits, performs checks on every applicant, regardless of ethnicity, national origin or religion.

Since 2002, USCIS has increased the number and scope of relevant background checks, processing millions of security checks without incident. However, in some cases, USCIS customers and immigrant advocates have expressed frustration over delays in processing applications, noting that individual customers have waited a year or longer for the completion of their adjudication pending the outcome of security checks. While the percentage of applicants who find their cases delayed by pending background checks is relatively small, USCIS recognizes that for those affected individuals, the additional delay and uncertainty can cause great anxiety. Although USCIS cannot guarantee the prompt resolution of every case, we can assure the public that applicants are not singled out based on race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin.

USCIS strives to balance the need for timely, fair and accurate service with the need to ensure a high level of integrity in the decision-making process. This fact sheet outlines the framework of the immigration security check process, explaining its necessity, as well as factors contributing to delays in resolving pending cases.

### Why USCIS Conducts Security Checks

USCIS conducts security checks for all cases involving a petition or application for an immigration service or benefit. This is done both to enhance national security and ensure the integrity of the immigration process. USCIS is responsible for ensuring that our immigration system is not used as a vehicle to harm our nation or its citizens by screening out people who seek immigration benefits improperly or fraudulently. These security checks have yielded information about applicants involved in violent crimes, sex crimes, crimes against children, drug trafficking and individuals with known links to terrorism. These investigations require time, resources, and patience and USCIS recognizes that the process is slower for some customers than they would like. Because of that, USCIS is working closely with the FBI and other agencies to speed the background check process. However, USCIS will never grant an immigration service or benefit before the required security checks are completed regardless of how long those checks take.

## Immigration Security Checks—How and Why the Process Works

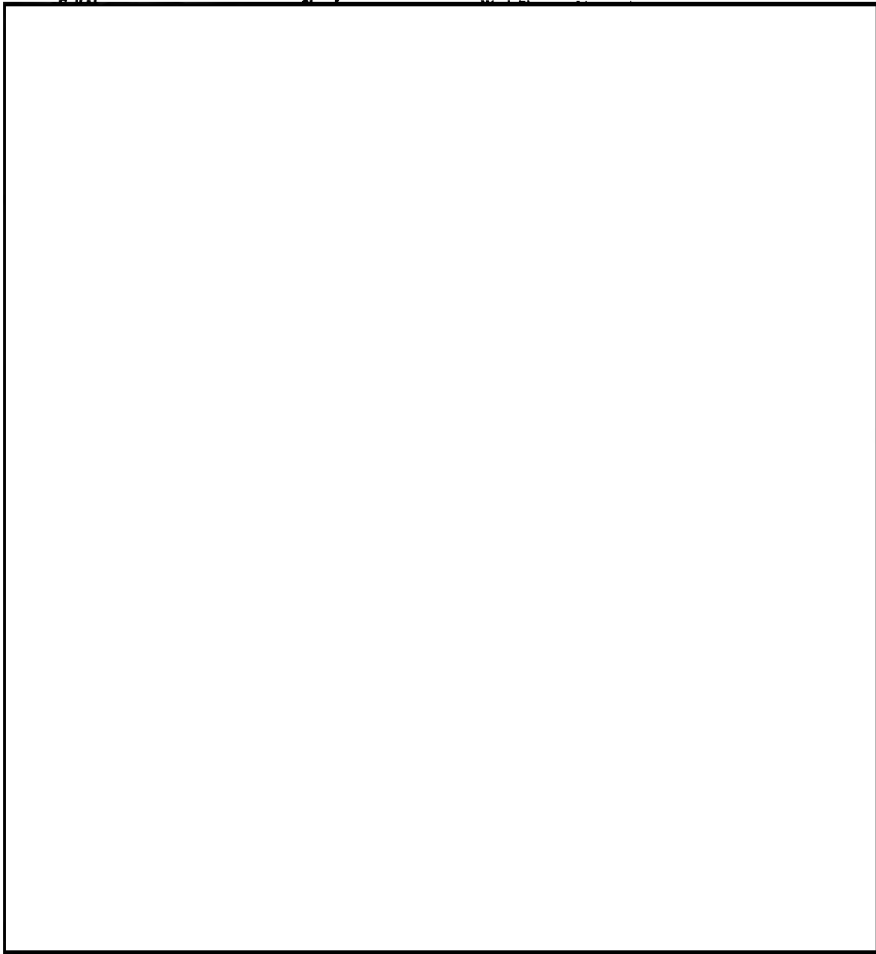
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### How Immigration Security Checks Work

To ensure that immigration benefits are given only to eligible applicants, USCIS adopted background security check procedures that address a wide range of possible risk factors. Different kinds of applications undergo different levels of scrutiny. USCIS normally uses the following three background check mechanisms but maintains the authority to conduct other background investigations as necessary:

- **The Interagency Border Inspection System (IBIS) Name Check**— IBIS is a multiagency effort with a central system that combines information from multiple agencies, databases and system interfaces to compile data relating to national security risks, public safety issues and other law enforcement concerns. USCIS can quickly check information from these multiple government agencies to determine if the information in the system affects the adjudication of the case. Results of an IBIS check are usually available immediately. In some cases, information found during an IBIS check will require further investigation. The IBIS check is not deemed completed until all eligibility issues arising from the initial system response are resolved.
- **FBI Fingerprint Check**—FBI fingerprint checks are conducted for many applications. The FBI fingerprint check provides information relating to criminal background within the United States. Generally, the FBI forwards responses to USCIS within 24-48 hours. If there is a record match, the FBI forwards an electronic copy of the criminal history (RAP sheet) to USCIS. At that point, a USCIS adjudicator reviews the information to determine what effect it may have on eligibility for the benefit. Although the vast majority of inquiries yield no record or match, about 10 percent do uncover criminal history (including immigration violations). In cases involving arrests or charges without disposition, USCIS requires the applicant to provide court certified evidence of the disposition. Customers with prior arrests should provide complete information and certified disposition records at the time of filing to avoid adjudication delays or denial resulting from misrepresentation about criminal history. Even expunged or vacated convictions must be reported for immigration purposes.
- **FBI Name Checks**—FBI name checks are also required for many applications. The FBI name check is totally different from the FBI fingerprint check. The records maintained in the FBI name check process consist of administrative, applicant, criminal, personnel and other files compiled by law enforcement. Initial responses to this check generally take about two weeks. In about 80 percent of the cases, no match is found. Of the remaining 20 percent, most are resolved within six months. Less than one percent of cases subject to an FBI name check remain pending longer than six months. Some of these cases involve complex, highly sensitive information and cannot be resolved quickly. Even after FBI has provided an initial response to USCIS concerning a match, the name check is not complete until full information is obtained and eligibility issues arising from it are resolved.

For most applicants, the process outlined above allows USCIS to quickly determine if there are criminal or security related issues in the applicant's background that affect eligibility for immigration benefits. Most cases proceed forward without incident. However, due to both the sheer volume of security checks USCIS conducts, and the need to ensure that each applicant is thoroughly screened, some delays on individual applications are inevitable. Background checks may still be considered pending when either the FBI or relevant agency has not provided the final response to the background check or when the FBI or agency has provided a response, but the response requires further investigation or review by the agency or USCIS. Resolving pending cases is time-consuming and labor-intensive; some cases legitimately take months or even



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Full Name	Class	Grade	Major	Minor	Section

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## *Multi Cultural Forum Sign-In*

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*Work Phone Mobile Phone Email Address*

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**AGENDA FOR MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2006, MEETING OF THE MULTI-  
CULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MCAC)**

6:00 P.M. - 6:15 P.M. Meet and Greet

6:15 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.

Current Issues

☐ U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services

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6:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

Townhall Meeting

- Agenda
- Speakers
- Publicity
- Refreshments

7:30 P.M.

Conclusion

**MULTI-CULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MCAC)**  
**NOVEMBER 13, 2006 MEETING**

**Announcements:**

- Next month's MCAC meeting will be on 12/18/06, at 6 p.m.

**Immigration Info from**

- Name checks/security checks are still the big issue. Notes/pamphlet information were provided at this meeting with details on the three tiered name check system, as well as the revised naturalization exam.
- In reference to the three tiers, please note that the most time consuming is the last one: the FBI name checks. This is problematic because when there is a match on the name provided by Immigration, the application process is held up. This is not because the FBI is deciding whether or not to let the individual in; they are merely searching and providing their results of the databases, and the decision lies with the immigration office.
- 80% of names come back shortly. Of the 20% that don't come back immediately, most cases are resolved within six months. The top countries are Mexico, Korea, Iraq and Iran.
- The naturalization exam is in the process of revision due to the subjectivity among various locations. Pilot testing will begin in Tuscon and Washington state, with ESL's "High Beginnings" program. The program itself won't be deployed until 2008 though. It will be civics based, with 96 questions and a short lesson plan included. This new format will try to show what the individual's attachment to the constitution is.
- Also in process is the Comprehensive Fee Review. The last one took place in 1998, and this is the first year that the program is not funded by tax revenue dollars. All the money from the user fees collected from the application process are paying for the agency's entire services, including the employees' salary. This is approximately \$4 million of Citizenship/Immigration Services that general tax revenue is not funding. Rumors have been circulating regarding the increase of the fee from \$400 to \$800. Although the fee study will probably show the results of a necessary increase, an increase of \$400 is not likely.
- The DHS Public Affairs contact for reg is  Office of Civil Rights/Civil Liberties.  will provide the contact number via email.

**Town Hall Meeting:**

- The TH Meeting will be this Sunday, 11/19/06 from 4-7 p.m. at the Brookhurst Community Center.



- Light refreshments are needed for estimated 100-200 people. MCAC will cover the cost as a group, and next month reimbursement will be discussed. It was decided at this meeting that the local members of MCAC will assist in obtaining the pastries from a local Arab bakery, as well as coffee from a local shop. Details will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Setting up will be from approximately 4 - 4:30 p.m., with informational booths set up within the venue and auditorium. Booths present will include information on: Crimes against children, hate crimes, public corruption, internet fraud, identity theft, gangs and violent crime, terrorists, recruitment/community outreach, etc. Each booth will have an expert in the subject matter, as well as pamphlet information.
- Anaheim Police Department requested that the Chief of Police speak at the meeting. So, the order of speakers for the program is as follows:
  - Moderator: Tareef
  - 1st speaker: Richard Chavez
  - 2nd speaker: Chief John Welter (of Anaheim PD)
  - 3rd speakers: Sireen & Hussam with opening remarks (MCAC)
  - 4th speaker: ADIC Steve Tidwell, FBI LA
- Special thanks to [redacted] for the discounted "In Focus" ad. She also took care of publicity with the OC mosques.
- CAIR's banquet is this Saturday evening. We'll bring flyers and Tidwell will also speak about the TH Meeting there, too.
- ADIC Steve Tidwell did various interviews and plugged the TH Meeting during press advisories, the Iranian based newspapers, NBC, Wall Street Journal and the last ten interviews as well. We will send out press advisories via email, and printed interviews he's done, too. We are also open to future press conferences with MCAC for the next meetings.

#### MCAC Website Update:

- [redacted] announced that MCAC has a separate account with HADI (Human Assistance Development International). Please write any checks to HADI and place MCAC in the memo/notes line of your check. Per our last meeting, it was agreed upon to have each organization contribute a total of \$300 for the next year. That should cover the expenses estimated with maintaining the site.